



Ginger Goat Farm

Our First Year...or So.

By Angela Shoe

Ginger Goat Farm

October 23, 2013 through July 28, 2014

I started the Ginger Goat Farm blog when we moved here about 1 or 2 years ago. Initially, I wrote it as an outlet for me; I never really thought that many people were reading it. Well, I guess some people are reading it and are a bit entertained by our (mis)adventures out here in our version of Green Acres.

I am grateful that people find this blog amusing because, really, I sort of just wrote it for myself as a form of cheap entertainment and to keep my writing skills—somewhat—sharp.

So, I will continue to write and promise to keep writing (because, Lord knows we sure find enough out here to write about); however, I can't promise I will write EVERY week. I know I made that promise a while back that I would—and I REALLY want to—but life just sort of happens sometimes (and other responsibilities and obligations, damnit). Nevertheless, I will really REALLY try...

Ginger Goat Farm is the lifelong dream of Billy and Angie ~ our mutual dream of creating and maintaining a natural lifestyle. After the initial shock of transitioning from city to country living, we will be adding chickens (*done*), nanny goats, ducks (*done*), bees, bunnies, and a massive organic garden to the homestead (*we're working on it*).

This little book documents our history over the past year--or so (from our first post October 23, 2012 through July 28, 2014. Really, it's more like 2 years, but who's counting?) of writing (blogging) about our adventures.

Read along and join us as we slowly figure out what in the hell we are doing...

About Us

About Goat (AKA Billy):



Billy, a born and raised Bushwaker (seriously), is a true Renaissance Man. From fixing busted water pipes, discussing local and international concerns, and protecting Angie from things that go bump in the night, Billy is probably one of the handiest of men this side of the Mississippi River.

He welcomes a new challenge and is excited about all of the adventures, both new and unexpected, that he and Angie will face.

About Ginger (AKA Angie):



Angie, a born and raised Buckeye, was raised on a mini-farm as a kid. She showed chickens and rabbits at the county fair (and won some ribbons!) and snapped beans, dug potatoes, and pulled weeds. Angie has talked a big game for many years about moving back to the country and now that it is really happening, she admits that she may not know as much as she thought she did.

As Billy, she welcomes a new challenge and is truly grateful that she has the opportunity to share this experience with him.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Meeting our first neighbor

October 23, 2012

Well, now EX-neighbor.

This past weekend, while working on the house and visiting with friends, we "met" one of our neighbors. As our friends were leaving, we received a frantic call....Billy's friend, Joe, had just ran over the above SIX FOOT RATTLESNAKE--several times--with his Tahoe at the end of our driveway. If the weight of the Tahoe didn't kill the poor girl, Billy then stabbed it with a pick (or stick) and then ripped it's head off. Yes, it was as gruesome as it sounds.



Billy then proceeded to skin it (see the carnage above), put her head in the freezer, and salt the skin (as directed by one of our "other" neighbors). The remaining parts of the snake were then triple-bagged and shipped back with us to Jacksonville. The following evening, Billy boiled the absolute shit out of it and ate a small portion of it. He explained that with a lot of pesto, it wasn't too bad.

Angie will take his word for it.

Transitioning from City- to Country-life

November 12, 2012

This weekend is the first weekend that we actually woke up with the understanding that we wouldn't have to leave for Jacksonville in the morning. Seriously, for the past month or so, we only stayed one night at a time. Everytime that we arrived, we were preparing to leave the next day. It was exhausting, especially for our dog, Sheila.

Sheila, our sassy and spry 14 1/2 year old dog (if she were a person, she would be a cross between Maggie Griffin and Betty White) was such a trooper....every weekend she



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would take her post in the back seat of the car and patiently wait out the 3 to 4 hour drive down I-95 to our ever evolving homestead (and be especially bitter during the 3 to 4 hour car ride back to Jacksonville). However, I think this time, she knew what was up; all of our "stuff" was here and none was left in Jacksonville.

This morning, she had a spring in her step...just like we did. We still cannot believe that we live here...we feel like squatters in someone else's home. We ACTUALLY live here. It is so amazing.....from the grey cranes squawking in the early morning, to the crickets chirping all night, we are here for good.....

Animals Everywhere...

November 18, 2012

This morning, Sheila and I were just hanging out by the pool and we saw the coolest turtle checking out the chicken coop:

He was a cool little guy, about 16-18 inches in diameter. His neck was brilliant bright yellow and green-striped. I wasn't sure what kind of turtle he was so, I did keep my distance. He was one of the fastest moving turtles I have ever seen....he moved almost as fast as Sheila did when she saw him.



Also, when we were done checking out him, I turned around and saw one of the grey cranes checking us out:



Usually, there are four of them, but for some reason, this one is kind of the odd one out. A couple of mornings ago, we saw him getting his butt kicked by one of the other ones. I feel kind of sorry for him...he seems to be always wanting to hang with the "cool kids" and they won't let him in their clique.

It's like high school never ends...even for birds.

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Big Blue

November 29, 2012

This morning, our tractor, Big Blue, finally made its way to Florida from Ohio. Big Blue is a 1964 Ford



2000, with power steering, a 3-point hitch, and PTO (*power take-off, not paid time off*). It's a sexy ride: Big Blue means a lot to us. My dad gave it to us. He bought it several years ago from longtime family friends and completely refurbished and detailed it out to the max. It's going to be put to good use at the farm....from mowing the yard, bushhogging the field, towing/hauling stuff, and....quite possibly....stylin' up and down the road....just kidding. We had some fun driving around today....Big Blue can move!

Now that we have a tractor, we are slowly becoming a real farm. The chicken coop is getting prepared for some baby chickens:

We'll be stylin' out the coop, too. Not sure the motif, yet. We are thinking something Key West kitsch. Chickens run around wild down there; it would fit right in here.

Now, if our avocado trees would just start bearing fruit....(pineapple and bananas go in the ground this weekend).



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Getting Ready for Christmas

December 1, 2012

Can you believe it's December? Already? Geesh.

Even though we have both lived in Florida since the 90s (well, Angie "squeaked in" in 1999) making us, I guess, *Floridians*, nearly 80 degree weather makes it extremely difficult to be in the mood to put out the holiday decorations and set up the tree. Especially when there is a garage full of stuff that still needs to go somewhere. Maybe we will just string some Christmas lights on the stuff and call it a day.



The move really has caused a shift in so many aspects of our lives, particularly going outside. I have never EVER seen so many red ant hills, and they're flippin' HUGE. We have to mow AROUND them. Seriously, check this one out:

I understand that this picture probably doesn't provide you with the perspective you need to understand how friggin' big it is, but trust me, that's the closest I'm getting to it. One red ant bite and it is a visit to the ER for me.

Also, whatever these little green seeds are:



they SUCK!

And I mean that, they suck on everything...jeans, socks, towels, the carpet, the rugs, the dog...and we find them everywhere. This morning, we sat around the pool picking them off of all the dirty clothes before we could do the laundry. It was nice, a bit of bonding, drinking our morning beverages, discussing our plans for the day, and PULLING THOSE DAMN SEEDS OFF OF OUR CLOTHES! Nothing shows love more than picking seeds off of your loved ones dirty socks.

Regardless, I wouldn't change anything to be where we are right now...red ants, demon seeds, and all.

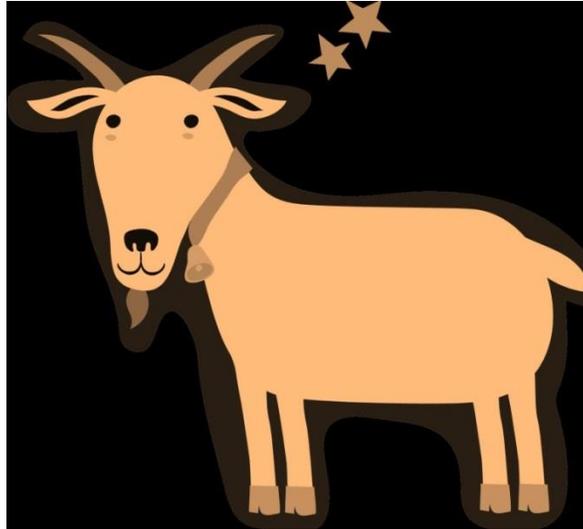
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New Logo

December 3, 2012

Our new mascot (maybe?):



Billy doesn't think he's orange enough.

What do YOU think?

Fresh Avocados...in 3 to 5 years, hopefully.

December 15, 2012

Exciting week here at the farm. We FINALLY planted our avocado trees!

For the past several years, we have been sprouting avocado pits (from the grocery store), repotting them as they grew into bigger and bigger plants, and hauling them along with us in our moves. We were just waiting for a place where we could plant them in the ground. We finally are at that place. A few of our trees are now over 6 foot tall:

They look pretty good in the ground, don't they?



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We have 8 avocado trees. I am not sure if 8 trees constitute a grove, or if a group of avocado trees are even called a grove, but we will just call it a grove. According to my scientific research (*Google* and *eHow.com*), only about 1 out of 10 avocado trees sprouted from grocery store pits will actually bear fruit. However, according to my neighbor, he says that is a bunch of **hogwash** (and he really used the word "hogwash"). And, you know what? I am more prone to believe a guy that uses the

word "hogwash" and gives me avocados that look like this:

than believe the self-proclaimed experts at *Google* or *eHow.com*. I mean, isn't it a beauty? He says ALL of the pits that he planted have all bore "pears" (for some reason, he calls avocados, pears. Whatever. They are delicious.). I mean, check this out:



Yummy!

New Shoes

December 29, 2012



Sexy, aren't they?

Exciting day out here at the farm. A few days ago, I drove into town (well, actually...I drove to Walmart) and bought a pair of shoes (well, actually...I bought a pair of boots). With all of the snakes (*see October 23rd post*) and fire ants (*see December 1st post*) running wild around here, I cannot risk being bitten by either one...or anything else, for that matter.

Also, with the baby chickens arriving in a couple of weeks and the goats soon after, I really need some footwear that are up for the task. Flopflops and old running shoes are not cutting it. I couldn't postpone buying a pair any longer:

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Genuine black rubber, mid-calf, and they are totally washable (with a garden hose). As you can see in the photo above, I accessorized them with some mud and grass from working in the yard earlier today.

Probably, the best \$14 I have ever spent!

Sad, sad week

January 9, 2013

This past week has been so sad at the farm. Last Wednesday evening, our dog--our heart--Sheila, was put to sleep. I wish I could write something very eloquent, very profound right now, but I just can't. I can't even go through the hundreds of pictures I have of her to post one here. Maybe I will later, then again, maybe I won't. I don't know.

If you have ever had a dog, you probably understand....or maybe, you don't. I crossed the line of seeing her as "just a dog" the moment I first held her. She and I had a bond that I can't explain. I hurt when she hurt; she hurt when I hurt. Even more amazing, when Billy entered our lives, she fully embraced him in "our pack."

This year, she and I would have been together for 15 years and with Billy, 11. As strange as it sounds to some people, we were a family. She was always on our minds; she made sure of that! She was in our wedding, sitting right in front of us while we spoke our vows. If we could take her--restaurants, parks, friends' homes, the beach--she went. Even if it was just running errands, she sat in the car (windows down, of course), patiently waiting. She went on countless vacations with us and if she couldn't go, we always made sure she was safe and well taken care of by friends and family who treated her just as their own. And, how many times did we decide to stay home just to be with her? Oh, so many times (and we happily did so).

We cooked special meals for her. She had the run of the house. And, after a while, we let her lay on the bed (or rather she manipulated us to lay on the bed).

She was respectful, stoic, and even tolerant (of me). I miss her. I miss her smell. I miss the way she used to almost purr when I buried my head in hers.

Even a week later, tears still fill my eyes thinking about her.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

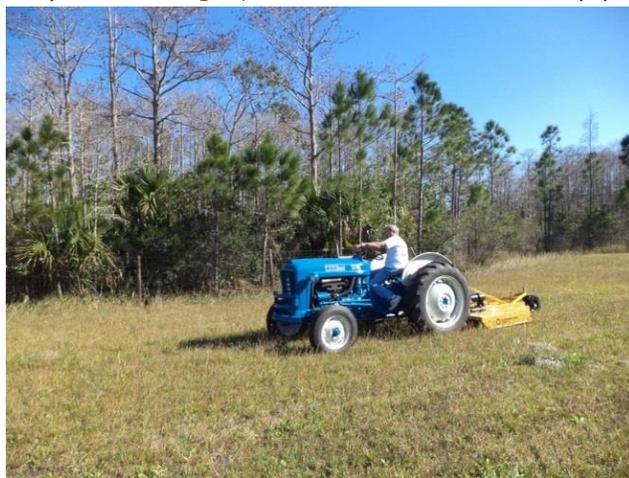
Moving forward

January 23, 2013

For the past week, my parents have been visiting (from Ohio) and the timing could not have been better. It has been pretty somber around here (*see previous post*) and they have really lightened the mood. We are having a great time. I think one of our favorite things to do is to watch the weather channel to find how cold it is back home (it was 9 degrees last night, BEFORE windchill). Yeah, but we are not COMPLETE jerks about it...we don't call my sister back home and rub it in (well, I think we did once, but just once....).

When they arrived last week, the weather was quite nice (80 degrees during the day, low 60s in the evening); however, for the past couple of days, we have had a "cold snap" (at least by our standards [65 degrees during the day, high 40s in the evening]) ~ I know, I know, no sympathy from my friends and family up North. ~ Billy and I are just miserable...jeans, sweatshirts, portable heaters (I'm not kidding). And my mom and dad? They are just thrilled. I mean, it is like they are waking up out of hibernation. They just can't sit still. Check out my dad:

He and Billy did a little "man-shopping" yesterday at Tractor Supply and bought a Bush Hog for Big Blue (that's the yellow-thing in the photo above). With all of the land we need to mow, a Bush Hog (yeah, that's what it's called. Google it if you don't believe me.) is a much better option than a riding mower (and could you imagine trying to push mow? With all of those despicable ant hills [*see December 1, 2012 post*]?). Forget about it.



My mom is crazy busy, too. While she was out in the yard digging up plants and pulling up weeds (and throwing bread), she made a couple of friends:

Those birds are on a 24-hour WATCH for her now. In fact, we made a special trip today to Publix for more bread for her to feed them.

Tonight, we are going to go to the local feed store and order our baby chickens. Hooray!

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Fun with bread

January 28, 2013

Along with the various wildlife we have around here on the farm (and our impending farm critters), I failed to mention that we have a fairly nice-sized pond stocked with Blue Gills (or Reds, if you are from Kentucky), some Bass, and a really big, really slow (or possibly, just really stupid) Catfish.

A new activity we have discovered to be quite entertaining is feeding the fish. It is an incredibly easy process that I have broken down for you into the following steps:

1. Buy the cheapest bread you can find (Walmart, Family Dollar, etc.).



2. Take out one slice (no need to put peanut butter and jelly on it, unless you plan on feeding the fish AND yourself during this activity).



3. Tear it up into bite sized pieces.



4. Throw the pieces at the pond and watch the fish go absolutely batshit crazy.



Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

The pond looks like it's boiling over...little buggers gobbling up morsels of substandard bread (it wasn't all that easy to snap a photo).

You can't help but get the giggles!

A little bit country and little bit rock-n-roll

February 9, 2013

This morning, I was awakened by the sound of gunshots....I mean A LOT of gunshots. Loud and kinda close gunshots. Normally, hearing a round of ammunition while I am still lying in bed would FREAK ME OUT; however, out here, I am confident that it's not a drive-by shooting. Nevertheless, it is still pretty concerning, because my mind starts to wander and think that *maybe* those cute little deer I saw when I was running yesterday or that bunny I saw hopping around the pond MIGHT be on the other side of that gun and, quite possibly, in somebody's frying pan. It's something I grapple with everyday living out here. We are just so close to the whole "Circle of Life" thing...not to get all Lion King on you (*cue theme song here*). Birth, life, death, rebirth....you know, deep stuff....

Anyway, this afternoon I was walking around (after, of course, the gunshots subsided) and I saw this behind our fence:



If you don't know what this is...it's wild hog tracks. Crazy, right? They love to dig up roots with their tusks, and by the looks of what you see in the photo above, this one went "hog wild"....I know, I know....sorry about that....

I guess that around here, we are rife with wild hogs. I only caught a glimpse of one--once--while I was running (for *exercise*, not for my life). Let me tell you, my running has taken on a whole new meaning since we have moved out here. Before, when we lived in the city, I was on guard for the occasional idiot driver and maybe some big dog that jumped over his electric fence. Now, it's fire ants, wild hogs, poisonous snakes, and weird-looking bugs with big stingers. I have to admit, it's kind of fun....I totally crank up my MP3 player with some hard-core music and just go with it.

Happy news!

February 12, 2013

Some excellent news out here on the farm...the sandhill cranes that visit us everyday.....they have decided to have their baby (or babies) here. When I went to check the mail last night, I faintly saw momma crane brooding in the pond (really it's just a big wetland) out front:



If you squint and look in the middle of the picture above, you can SORTA see her. I didn't want to get too close to her.

I went on Wikipedia (my resource for everything, from incubation periods of Florida Sandhill Cranes to the Carnival Cruise Triumph fiasco....I want my news quick and to the point, don't judge me) and learned that we should have little baby cranes around here in a month or so.

We were wondering why we have only seen one of them hanging around the house for the past few days. We are so excited.

Team Turtle or Team Fish?

February 26, 2013

Okay, Okay. I have something I have to share and I am not too proud of it. Remember a while back (see *November 18th post*) I wrote about how "cool" turtles were hanging around here? Well, I have had a change of heart. We have one, possibly two, of those little bastards now living in our pond and they are EATING all of our fish. I mean, I get the whole "circle of life" thing (see *February 9th post*), but I don't want turtles eating our fish...WE want to eat our fish (and be entertained at the same time [see *January 28th post*]).



Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

I consider myself a pacifist; however, I think we have an all out turtle war here at the farm and we are NOT going to lose!

Not sure if you can see them in the picture above, but the green circle is around our "special needs" catfish (see *January 28th post*) and the red circle is around the (hopefully soon removed and released back into the wild) turtle.

Turtles are SO cute scurrying around the yard, but not so cute swimming around our pond acting like it's Happy Hour at Applebees. I have (not so) lovingly named this turtle Jackwagon, and his/her days/hours are numbered here at the farm.

Golden Eagle

March 5, 2013

Yesterday, when Billy and I were assessing how the fish were faring in the pond (since successfully relocating Jackwagon several days ago, see *previous post*), we saw a GOLDEN EAGLE checking us out:

Pretty cool, huh? He was very quiet. Very stoic. Just perched up on that branch like he was staring us down and contemplating his next meal....from the pond (or our version of Applebees' Happy Hour for the critters running/flying around here).



Regardless, he was beautiful. Several days ago, we also heard an owl. We haven't seen one, yet, but we hear him at dusk sometimes. Nothing sounds as soothing as an owl hooting...well, except maybe some Marvin Gaye, just kidding.

I guess "protecting" our fish is a moot proposition around here. Either by planes (eagles), trains (turtles), or automobiles (otters), those fish are going to be the entree on some critter's meal plan.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Countdown to Chickie-babies

March 11, 2013

Two days (most probably) until our day-old chicks come home!!! Stay tuned!

Proud Poultry Parents

March 17, 2013

Yesterday was another eventful day out here at the farm. After an unexpected occurrence at our local feed store (the electric went out at the hatchery, causing over 10,000 baby hatchlings NOT to hatch~so sad), we went to TSC (the place where we bought the Bush Hog, *see January 23rd post*) to purchase our chickies--rather than waiting ANOTHER two weeks. We anticipated having our baby chickies by the end of February and if we kept waiting around, our chickens wouldn't be laying eggs until Thanksgiving!

Anyway, when I called TSC they explained that they did have baby chicks--Rhode Island Reds, no less--but we would have to hurry because they were going fast. So, Billy and I found a box and rushed over to adopt our babies. Well, let me tell you, nothing looks, or sounds, cuter than 5 bathtubs FULL of baby chicks in the middle of a country supply store EXCEPT another bathtub full of baby ducks. Seriously.

After picking our 10 baby Rhode Island Red girls (at least we HOPE there are 10 girls in there...you never know, sexing day-old chicks is usually an 80-90% proposition...we could have a rooster, or 2, in the



making), we fell in love with the ducklings. So, we bought 2 of them, too. We just couldn't help ourselves. Funny thing is....neither one of us know ANYTHING about ducks, other than we know they like water and we have a pond.

Also, we have NO IDEA what kind or what sex the ducks are. Unlike the chickens, which were specifically named and sexed, the sign on the bathtub full of ducklings read, "**Ducks. Unsexed. Blended breed. Could be migratory.**" So, another adventure for us or, as we like to say around here, another learning opportunity. 😊

Aren't they the cutest little things?

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

We are having so much fun with the little buggers. We literally watch them eat, drink, poop, and repeat...within 15 minutes. And because of this eat-drink-poop cycle, we have to change the newspaper lining, like 8 times a day. Regardless, having them is just too much fun.

Billy and I are so weird, we keep them in the living room so we can watch and listen to them. We had read that baby chicks and ducks should be kept in a cardboard box; however, we discovered, really fast, that boxes are too messy and too smelly. We found that housing them in the big plastic bins we moved in with work much better because we can hose them out between cleanings. **Something to keep in mind if you ever decide to adopt baby chicks or ducks.**

This afternoon, we took the ducks on an adventure:

Nothing is more fun to a couple of two-day old ducks than a pie pan filled with an inch or two of water! Frik and Frak (our baby duckies) had a blast splashing (and pooping) around in the water. They aren't quite old enough to be in deep water yet, but they are totally ready to frolic in the shallow end of the pool. Although we want the baby chickies and duckies to be raised together as much as possible, we have to make sure that Frik and Frak do have a "duckie break" away from their chickie cousins.



Happy campers

March 19, 2013

This afternoon, Billy and I took the whole gang for a field trip outside and, I'm not kidding, Frik (or Frak, we don't know the difference between them yet) left this:

Yes, that is poop...**POOP in the shape of a SMILEY FACE!**
How about that? Pretty flipping awesome, huh?

I wouldn't believe it either, but we saw him/her actually squatting and letting it out. It was so cool, we almost left it (I know, I know, how disgusting). Nevertheless, this little pile of happiness was about 10 feet from the pool so, we decided a picture was good enough...then pressure-sprayed all of the poop away. And trust me, the chickie and duckie babies pretty much dookie-bombed the patio.



Latest family photo

March 23, 2013

CHEEEEEEEZZZZZ!



I want to share with everyone our latest family photo to commemorate the chickies' and duckies' (one week) birthday. And, just like any typical photo shoot with "children," some behave and some just don't; however, Frik and Frak love to mug for the camera (as you can see above).

The babies are just starting the awkward "tweener" phase (you know, just like people); they still have those adorable baby faces, but they're starting to grow in their feathers. They are just growing up so fast.

Oh, and remember when I wrote about all of these armadillo holes in our yard (or, didn't I write that? I can't remember if I did or not.)? Anyway, we have all of these damn armadillo holes ALL over our yard (I wish they would dig up all of the damn fire ant hills [see *December 1 post*]!) and I caught one of the little buggers in action today:



Little stinker. They sure are not the brightest and/or most graceful creatures that we have running around here. He bumped his head on the fence (pretty hard, I might add) when he scurried away from me.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Introducing the Crane Family

March 26, 2013

Remember awhile back I wrote that Momma Crane was brooding in our wetland (see *February 2nd post*)? Well, last week, Baby Crane made his/her way into the world. For a few days, Momma and Poppa protected themselves and their little bundle of joy in the marsh; however now they are venturing off in the yard:

The baby crane is circled in **red** and, if you look in the background, you can see a deer in the background! How cool is that?



I couldn't believe it! I was just clicking away pictures of the Crane Family and just happened to look up and saw these 2 deer in the yard...wagging their cute little white tails, snacking on grass. Here's the other deer:



Surprisingly, both deer hung around the yard for about an hour. It was an absolutely amazing morning!

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Swim time for F & F

March 27, 2013

Yesterday was quite a day for Frik and Frak (F & F)...they experienced their first bath and they had a GREAT time. Check out those little duckie faces--pure bliss:

We are lucky that we have a separate bathtub and shower so we could let them go absolutely crazy...and they did. However, let's face it, as cute as F & F are, they dookie EVERYWHERE. Duck dookie isn't the WORST smell I have ever encountered, but it sure isn't the most pleasant, either. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with a 1 being a decaying skunk in a landfill in the middle of a Florida summer and a 10 being a newborn baby lying on fresh linen during a spring rain), baby duck dookie is probably a 5, if you clean it up, a lot.



However, it's pretty oozy, which doesn't help (that's why I have rubber gloves). Which makes me wonder...remember during the first season or two of Friends? Joey and Chandler had a pet duck and chicken running around their apartment? Well, that's just not possible or they'd be stepping on slimy dookie bombs all over the place.

So, Billy and I made a very difficult decision....we concluded that we must separate the chickies and the duckies, at least for now. Although we want the chickies and the duckies to be raised together, F & F are a hot mess. It is next to impossible to keep our brooder (a huge cardboard box with a heat lamp) clean and dry with F & F rapidly developing into their rebellious teenage years. They are ducks, not chickens, and they want to be wet. They use the waterer as a sprinkler system which is not so healthy for the chickens.

Although everyone seems to be adjusting to the new arrangement, the one chickie that used to sleep between F & F is pretty sad. I think she thought she was a duck.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Leaving the nest....moving out

April 3, 2013

Well, the time has finally come...the chickies and duckies are no longer babies; they are ready to move out of the garage and into their "grown up" home (see *November 29th* post):

It is crazy how fast our "babies" have grown up, especially the ducks! Through some "scientific" research ([Backyard Chickens](#) and [Wikipedia](#)), we have concluded that our ducks are Pekin Ducks (aka the [Aflac duck](#)) and will be full grown in 7 weeks!!! Crazy, right?

The chicks, on the other hand, have to wait a little while longer until they look like chickens...like 16 more weeks (and it's not a graceful maturation process like the ducks). So, right now, the chicks are in full swing of their early teenage years, but instead of zits and squeaky voices, they are half-molted with multi-colored feathers and patchy fuzz. Regardless, they are still cute (at least to me, anyway).

So, we are happy to report that at nearly 3 weeks, we have NO fatalities and the chicks and ducks STILL get along. Quite a feat! However, we have some really, REALLY sad news that I debated whether or not I should even report....



Very early this past Sunday morning (like around 3 or 4 AM), Billy and I heard the Cranes squawking it up, which was weird because they usually don't start that nonsense until 6 or 7 in the morning. We didn't think too much about it and didn't see hide nor hair (feather?) of the Crane Family the next day and then Monday (yesterday), we saw Momma and Poppa walking around the yard in a catatonic state with no baby. Yes, you read that right, no Baby Crane. They are still walking around in a daze today:

We, like them, are utterly devastated. In fact, it is so disheartening...Momma and Poppa Crane hang out around the chicken house and just stare at the chicks and ducks.

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We have no idea what happened. Was it a wolf? An eagle? A snake? Or did the baby just die of natural causes (I know getting attacked/eaten by a predator is natural), but still, it just sucks. Poor Momma sat out there in the cold, brooding, all of those weeks and for what? A broken heart. Sigh.

Introducing Daisy and Duke

April 5, 2013

Well, if enough isn't going on with Frik and FraK and the Chickie Posse adjusting to their new home and Momma and Poppa Crane trying to make another baby (yes, I caught them, TWICE, making sweet love to each other in the yard...they need to get a room), Billy and I brought Daisy and Duke home two days ago. Aren't they cute?

Daisy is in the foreground acting all demure and Duke is the rascal chomping on her ear. They are Australian Shepard mixed-breeds (and I liberally use the term "mixed") that Billy and I adopted from the no-kill shelter. But, let's be honest here, they picked us. Out of the litter of seven puppies, they looked the LEAST like Aussies, but they were the sweetest. We have NO IDEA who/what their papa is/was...they most probably look like him...whatever he is/was (if you have idea, please let us know. Maybe let him know, too. We might have to call the Maury Show and get a DNA test.).



any

Daisy and Duke are destined to be the Dynamic Duo around the farmstead with many responsibilities...from herding Frik and FraK and the Chickie Posse (and our soon to be adopted goats [4 months?!]) to helping Billy protect Angie from things that go bump in the night. However, right now, at only eight weeks, their only responsibility is to NOT dookie in the house, which can be challenging at times. Who knew that living out in the country would be filled with so much dookie...*everywhere* (see *March 27th post*)?

Spring is in the air...

April 10, 2013

Spring is in the air, everywhere you look around....which means here in Central Florida, mid-80 degree temperatures in the afternoons and low 70s in the evenings. By most peoples' standards, those temperatures are straight up summer, but around here, it is springtime. Ah, lovely spring, that short time in Florida before the onslaught of mosquitoes, the imminent threat of hurricanes, and now that we live in a pretty remote area, the scare of wild/brush fires. Regardless, we wouldn't be anywhere else.

We have been trying to get Ginger Goat Farm in shape for summer, but I have to admit, with Daisy and Duke (our *Dynamic Duo*, or what we call them right now, *Double Trouble*) becoming a part of our family last week (see *April 5th post*), we are quite busy/exhausted. Our garden is nowhere near what I thought it would be by now:



Seriously, that (above photo) is my garden...plus a tomato plant in a pot on my kitchen windowsill. I am a little disappointed in myself right now, but the good news is, I should have some great squash, lavender, chives, and something else (I totally forgot what it is that I planted) in a month or two. With all of the crazy critters flying, crawling, digging, and skipping around here, we are totally restrategizing our gardening/farming plans. Not sure exactly what or where yet, but we will keep you in the loop.

Also, can you believe it has been almost a month since we brought home Frik and Frak and the Chicks (sounds like a singing group from the early 70s, doesn't it?)? Me, neither (see *March 17th post*). Anyway, here's our latest family photo:



The family was split up for a brief moment (see *March 27th post*), but they are all back together now. Crazy how big Frik and Frak are getting, they could almost sell Aflac. We aren't sure yet if F & F are boys or girls, but we have a sneaking suspicion that they are both are boys. Oh well, no eggs from them. The chicks are slowly making their way through puberty and, just like teenagers, they are a little sassy

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

and awkward looking...but still sweet. We are expecting eggs from them (hopefully, all of the chicks are girls) around the first of August.

So, we will be eating A LOT of eggs around here....eggs benedict, soufflés, frittatas, homemade ice cream, quiche, deviled eggs, egg salad....(imagine Bubba Blue from the movie Forrest Gump rattling off all of these things you can make with eggs instead of shrimp).

A talkin' to....

April 11, 2013



Well, did I just get my ass chewed out by Daisy and Duke. I guess last night while we were sleeping, D & D logged into my computer and read yesterday's post. They were none too happy that:

1. There were no pictures of them.
2. I only mentioned them once.
3. And, I didn't write about how they were starting to get the "hang" of the whole peeing/pooing outside situation.

So, I promised them I would post a super-cute picture of them:

Aren't they adorable?

Lake Ginger Goat

April 16, 2013

Yesterday, Frik and Frak finally had their day to do what "grown up" ducks do....swim in a real body of water. No more swimming in a pie pan (*see March 17th post*) or in the bathtub (I know, gross, but I REALLY bleached it when we took them out [*see March 27th post*]), but a real pond with fish and everything:



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They look like real ducks now, don't they? It was incredibly cute watching them dive down to the bottom of the pond and then jolt right back up to the top. Special Fred (see *January 28th and February 26th posts*) didn't exactly know what to make of them and kept a close watch.

We were a little nervous about them making it back to the coop, especially when we saw the Golden Eagle (see *March 5th post*) starting to circle the pond. F & F are getting big, but not so big that Mr. Eagle couldn't swoop right down and take one away for an afternoon snack. However, Billy and I herded (if you can herd 2 ducks) them out of the pond and they waddled their little tails right back to the coop.

The Latest and Greatest

April 23, 2013

Everything is going well out here out on the farm. For the past few days, we have been building Frik and Frak a palatial estate to call their own:



As you can see, the home is waterfront with custom landscaping, a private bath, a front AND side porch (both with water views), and it is freshly painted...inside and out. We only need to fit the roof (to keep out raccoons, bobcats [seriously], etc.) and they will be moving into their new home very soon (at least during the night, they will be free-ranging during daylight hours). We decided with daily "duckie time" (i.e. a waddle down to frolick in the pond), the challenge of corralling F & F back into the chicken coop (because the door opens the OPPOSITE direction we need it to) and F & F starting to pick on the Chicken

Posse when they jump up on their roost (because they are "taller" than the ducks when they are perched), it was time for them to move on out and be grown ups.

Speaking of "growing up" check out Daisy and Duke:

We took them to the vet yesterday and received some startling/surprising news. When we talked with the people at the shelter, they told us that Daisy and Duke would *probably* be 40, maybe 45, pound dogs when they fully matured. Oh no, our vet (who is AWESOME, she is a country vet so, when we get



Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

goats, we can go to her, too) told us we are probably looking at 70 POUND DOGS! Yes, you read that right....70 pound dogs. Each. That is A LOT of dog.

Right now, Duke is teetering around 16 pounds and Daisy is at about 14.5. They have gained about 7 pounds, each, in the (almost) 3 weeks we have had them. But what do you do? Quit feeding them? No. And we can't/won't take them back; we are so in love with both of them. Anyway, it would be like returning your baby back to the hospital because he/she is a ginger (I can say that because I have red hair).

So, we are looking at having about 140 pounds of dog around here....

Expectant Mother

April 24, 2013

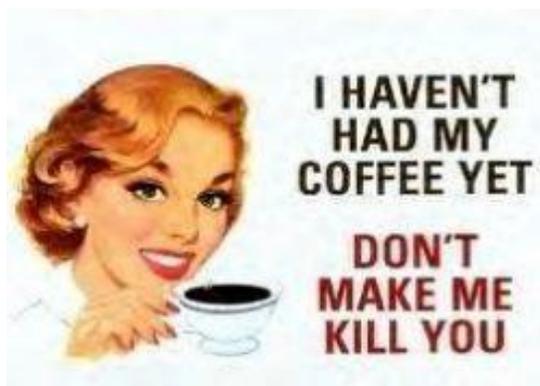
We have some fabulous news to report...Momma Crane is brooding again! I guess all that wild sex she and Poppa Crane have been doing all over the yard for the past few weeks....worked. Our congratulations to the happy couple.

This nesting place is a bit higher off of the ground and more towards the center of the wetland than the last time. The expectant couple also appear to be more alert. Let's keep our fingers crossed this go around!!!!!!



Happy morning time

May 6, 2013



Well, there's something I have to share with you, I have never EVER liked mornings. I found them excruciatingly painful and, if I had to be somewhere before 11 o'clock, I had to set my alarm. For reals. I am not kidding. I am not proud of this fact, but it is totally true.

I never understood people who actually LIKED--no, let me change that--LOVED mornings. I have met and know real people who wax on and on about the joys of mornings....the sunrise, the chirping of the birds, the smell in the air, yadda, yadda, yadda. I

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didn't understand what in the hell they were talking about. To me, nothing really good started until it got DARK, you know, when there's a Happy Hour and good TV. I saw the sun rise on that rare occasion when I stayed up way too late or I HAD to get up really early to do something that I procrastinated doing until the very last second. Sunrises, to me, usually were associated with something negative.

Well, living out here, I have had a real paradigm shift.

In the city--where both of us have lived for the better part of our adult lives--mornings suck...from the obnoxious sound of your alarm first thing in the morning, to the early morning commute (especially when school is in session, damn those school buses and 15 MPH school zones) and the long line at Starbucks. I did not see one redeeming quality of mornings.....until now.

In the country, mornings rock (plus, we have a whole lot of work we have to get done and there are only so many hours of light in a day)! Many mornings we wake up with deer hanging out in the yard. It's pretty cool. Also, our chickens aren't quite old enough to be cock-a-diddle-dooing yet, but our neighbor's chickens are....and at 5ish EVERY morning, they are singing their song (our hope is that our chickens NEVER cock-a-diddle-do because if they do....we have a rooster [or two, or God forbid, three roosters]).

We have too much to do around here to be lolly-gagging around in bed and you know what? That's okay. The mornings out here have a sort of beautiful silence that you just don't get in the city or even later on in the day. And let me tell you, the sun rising over our tree line to the east is just gorgeous. And the air...it smells so fresh....

Oh no.....I guess I am a morning convert. Shhhhh.....DON'T TELL ANYBODY.

Mistletoe and whatnot

May 13, 2013

Honestly, there hasn't been that much excitement going on for the past few days. We have been working around the farm just trying to keep everything under control so we aren't completely flooded when rainy season begins...which is less than a month away (time sure does fly by, doesn't it?). Wish us luck...hopefully we don't have to use our boat to get out to the barn.

See that clump of green "stuff" in the middle of the tree in the photo to the right? THAT is mistletoe. Anyway, I



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thought I'd share a little bit of trivia with you that you may or may not already know...did you know that mistletoe is a parasitic plant? I didn't and if you already did, well, my hat is off to you (aren't you a wealth of random knowledge :)?). It really is (Google it). So, next Christmas (or Hanukkah, or Festivus, or whatever you celebrate), you are welcome to grab yourself a bunch and dangle it over the one you love.

Please forgive my dogs making out in the lower left corner of the photo. I guess that mistletoe is working.....even off season.

Oh, Daisy and Duke.....sigh.....so in love with each other (I mean SO in love with each other, it's borderline inappropriate). Their love for each other is so strong that neither one listen to us. So, after much deliberation, we have decided to separate them during the day. We have concluded that if they are going to bond with us, we can't let them be with each other 24/7. Billy has taken "charge" of Daisy (the needy one) and Angie has taken "charge" of Duke (the obstinate one). It's tough on us because we love both of them equally. I mean look at those puppy faces:

Daisy is in the front with the big ears (sometimes they're up, sometimes they're down). Her ears fit her personality....crazy and all over the place. Duke is in the back, sort of sitting, sort of lying down. A perfect example of his personality...doing what he wants to do, when and how he feels like doing it.



We have twins!!!

May 28, 2013



If you are a regular reader of our ramblings, you might remember a couple of months ago the Crane Family (as well as all of us here at the farm) experienced the loss of Baby Crane (see *April 3rd post*). Nevertheless, after a few days of mourning, Momma and Poppa were at it again (see *April 5th post*).

Well, a couple of evenings ago, Billy and I were sitting out back discussing the events of our day and heard the cranes squawking it up out front (very similar to the sounds we heard that fateful

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night when the first baby met her demise, so sad). We just had this feeling that THIS time, these noises were HAPPY squawks. And we were right.

Aren't they adorable? TWINS! Unfortunately, since that following morning, we have not seen them around the farm :(We did speak with our neighbors and they have seen them wandering around; which is bittersweet news for us. Although we are thrilled that the babies and parents are alive and well, we are a little bit brokenhearted that we might not have the opportunity to watch them grow up on our farm. Such is life.

In other news, Frik and Frak are fully grown AND we are 99.99% sure that they are a boy and a girl. Hooray. Unfortunately, they still think that they are chickens and we have to almost force them to have "duckie time" (see *April 16th post*). The chicken posse is alive and well...almost sassy. We think we have 3 roosters and 7 hens, but the jury is still out on the final decision at this time. Fresh eggs should be coming around within the next couple of months. Yum!

Daisy and Duke are also doing well....getting big. Duke is probably pushing 30 pounds now and Daisy is nearing 25. Duke is still a little headstrong and Daisy is still, well, a little crazy. We are sticking to our plan of Billy in "charge" of Daisy (which is well and good because she is absolutely in love with him) and Angie in "charge" of Duke (as much as anyone can be in "charge" of Duke. Duke is Duke and will do what he wants, when he wants). We think the plan is working. They actually come to us when we call them, even when they are in the middle of one of their *awkward* make-out sessions (see *May 13th post*).

A lover and a fighter

June 12, 2013

Last weekend, Daisy and Duke had their first lesson in herding, more specifically, sheep herding. Although we have little (really, no) interest to include sheep to our ever growing homestead, sheep are--supposedly--the best animals for dogs to learn how to herd (plus, there is a dog herding "school" fairly close to us). The whole experience was fun, at least for Daisy, who excelled at herding sheep (even appropriately nipping at the sheeps' heels). Check her out in action:

Scrappy little thing, isn't she? No fear. A total natural. She made her poppa proud (if you remember, Billy is her "charge" [see *May 13th post*]).



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Duke, on the other hand, not so much. He was more content lazing around, watching his sister hard at work, and mugging for photo ops:



All of these behaviors have earned Duke the well deserved nickname of Duke Hefner (you know, Hugh from *The Girls Next Door*, the notorious octogenarian ladies' man). Can't you just see Duke sitting on a lounge chair, puffing on a cigar, wearing a smoking jacket?

Duke didn't want ANY part of the whole herding situation. Angie had to DRAG him--crying like a little bitch--into the sheep pen. He just sat in the pen (hugging the door to get out) and pretty much watched Angie herd the sheep. She tried everything...from chasing the sheep to him to pretending to play with the sheep to even picking Duke up and carrying him after the sheep (which with Duke weighing in around 30

pounds and the temperature hovering around 90+ degrees in the sun, was not an easy feat). Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

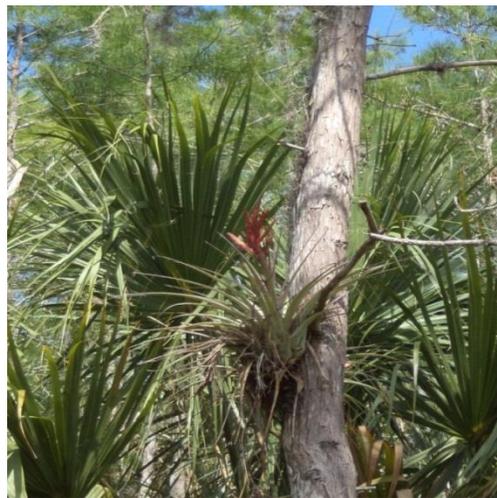
Afterwards, the trainer said that Duke was probably tired and that we should bring him back in a few weeks. We believed her, until we got home, when Duke proceeded to just let loose running around the pond and fighting with his sister. So much for Duke being "tired." We think he is just uninterested.

So, we have a lover (Duke) and a fighter (Daisy) on our hands. They may look alike, but they are definitely two distinctly different dogs.

Chicken photobomb

June 19, 2013

I was out taking a walk earlier today and noticed this striking speck of red out across the creek (or slew, slough, or slue [all pronounced the same way], if you are up on your Shakespearean prose), running on the far end of our property that borders state land:



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It's a Bromeliad, and just like the mistletoe we have growing/vampiring on one of our other trees (see *May 13th post*), it is a parasitic plant. I have spent A LOT of money on those damn plants in the past. Who knew I could have yanked one out of a tree and saved myself some cash? Anyway, it's pretty, isn't it?

On my way back from my slough/slew/slue walkabout, the ducks and chickens were getting all riled up at me. Frik and Frak DEMANDED that I take their picture (it's been a while). While the two of them were glamour-posing for me, one of the chickens totally photobombed them (bottom left-hand corner):



Frik and Frak may THINK they run the coop, but every once in awhile, the chicken posse will put those two in their place.

We are happy to report we still have NO casualties in the bird department; all chickens are alive and kicking (and some of them are flying, not professionally, they're still novices). We still have no idea how many hens and roosters we have--we are hoping for a 10 out 10, hens winning--but the jury is STILL out. After the hens start laying eggs, the hormones will be in full force and there will be NO question who are the roosters.

Surprise Special Guest Stars to the Homestead

June 21, 2013

Earlier today, while we were doing what we do around the farmstead, Billy noticed that the Crane Family wandered back to our property; the first we have seen them since the birth of the Twins nearly a month ago (see *May 28th post*). The family didn't come too close to the house (and we didn't want to get too close to them), but we were lucky enough to grab a shot of them as they were meandering around, digging for bugs:

We are thrilled that the Twins are still alive and well. I think Poppa wanted to come up and greet us; however, Momma was still a little stand-offish (rightfully so, this is her second go-around at Mommy-hood within 4



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months).

It's amazing how much the Twins have grown in such a short amount of time (approximately 3 weeks, see *May 28th post*). They're both still gingers...but not for long.

Pond puppies

June 24, 2013

After MONTHS of deliberating back and forth on the gender of our ducks--Frik and Frak, we have (sadly) concluded that they are boys. BOTH have that distinctive drake feather, a low raspy *kinda* quack, and while they aren't really aggressive, both of them *really* like to follow closely and nibble (kiss/makeout) on us...except when we go to the pond. Weird, isn't it? Have you ever heard of ducks that avoid ponds? We hadn't, either.

Billy thinks that they need some "action" (aka some women). The good thing is that Frik and Frak have shown absolutely no aggression towards the chickens (and the jury is STILL out on the guy-to-girl chicken posse ratio). However, we do know when the hens start laying eggs, the roosters (if we have any) could turn into little monsters and we fear Frik and Frak could do the same. Only time will tell...

Even though Frik and Frak won't go in the pond, it sure doesn't stop Daisy and Duke. The Dynamic Duo are really starting to LOVE the pond, especially Duke (he's the one in front):

Duke has a real aptitude for the water; he's more duck-like than our damn ducks. Ever since the sheep-herding experience (see *June 12th post*), we were a little "concerned" of where his talents lie (because it sure wasn't herding). He absolutely LOVES swimming; Daisy, not so much. She only gets in the water to agitate Duke.



Maybe with Daisy's herding ability and Duke's swimming skills, we can get those damn ducks in the pond before summer ends!!!!!!

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The Crane Family, recurring Guest Stars

June 28, 2013

A torrid summertime day here at the homestead. The type of day a person wakes up before 5 AM to do what needs to be done to escape the wicked Florida heat that arrives at...let's say...8 AM! And, along with the heat, let's not forget the bugs. Oh, the fantastic exotic bugs that bite and swell up and itch (we have found baking soda works pretty good on them).



Anyway, while we were inside hydrating (the new term for drinking water), we heard the all-too-familiar "cawkings" of the Cranes wandering around, foraging for bugs. While the Crane Family no longer considers the homestead their home anymore, we are starting to be a regular stop on their rounds. Don't they look like a well-adjusted modern family?

For some reason, when they were walking up towards me, that campy 60s theme song from The Monkees came into my head. I have no idea why. Maybe it was the way they were walking or something, but it made me giggle.

The babies are cute, aren't they? They're no longer gingers--more of a strawberry-blonde--with just a hint of greyish feathers peeking through the baby fuzz.

It looks like Momma and Poppa have gotten through the "danger zone." The twins are much bigger than their deceased older sibling (*see April 3rd post*). So, unless something crazy happens...we have a mini-flock of cranes living part time at Ginger Goat Farm.

Great Big *little* News

July 1, 2013

Every morning, we have a ritual that we do around here which includes letting the chickens and ducks (or as we like to call them, "duckens" or "chucks" because Frik and Frak think they are chickens) free range around the yard. Anyway, this afternoon, when Billy went back out to "herd" the chickens



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and duckens/chucks back into their coop, he found 2 little surprises in the garden shed (one on the dirt floor, and the other where we store the hay):

Aren't they cute? Our first eggs. We are so excited (to eat them for breakfast tomorrow [for a REALLY small fried egg sandwich])! The eggs are a little sooner than we expected as our chickens are approximately 17 weeks old. We really didn't anticipate any eggs for another 3 weeks or so, but, whatever...we have eggs! Which also means we MIGHT NOT have any roosters! Wouldn't that be flipping awesome?

And, you want to hear something really weird? We JUST put the nesting boxes in the chicken coop YESTERDAY! For reals. Check it out:

Billy designed and built it himself. It has 7 nesting boxes (ergonomically-designed for ultimate comfort and style), removable floors and walls (for ease of cleaning [thank you, Billy]), and a slanted roof that can be lifted (again, thank you Billy). We have WAY more boxes than we really need right now, but we are looking to add to our chicken brood (as) soon (as we figure out what we are doing). Talk about serendipitous timing, right?



Hopefully, it won't take too long for the chickens to figure out what the nesting boxes are for because it could be like an Easter Egg Hunt around here for a while (except no Easter Bunny or chocolate eggs or those dippy little plastic eggs filled with jelly beans).

Another day, another egg

July 2, 2013

Yesterday wasn't a fluke (*see previous post*), we got another egg this morning; however, it wasn't in the nesting box. Just like yesterday, one of the hens (we can definitely call them hens now, YAY) jumped up on top of the hay box and laid her little egg there.

I have to go to the feed store today and buy layer feed and oyster shells...no more chick starter !

Huevos rancheros

July 3, 2013

I want to share with you our 3 eggs from the past 2 days:



Delicious!

Puppy Parents of the Year (Not!)

July 8, 2013

Tough day out here at Ginger Goat Farm....well, at least for Daisy and Duke. Today was neuter/spay day for the Dynamic Duo. Poor babies, especially for Daisy--girl puppies have it especially rough. Over the next five days, Daisy has to take a series of two sets of pills (strong ones at that) for her pain and inflammation. She also has to take an antibiotic (which, I think, I've taken before). Duke, on the other hand, has three days' worth of chewable (i.e. flavored) "treat" pain meds. I guess if you think about it, her surgery was MUCH more invasive and intense.



Understandably, the two of them have been just lying/sleeping around the house, at least today (and probably for the next day or two). However, after they start to feel better (and not tripping out on their pain meds), it should be VERY interesting for us to keep these two from NOT jumping, playing, getting wet (with the pond AND the pool), and NOT licking their own (or their sibling's) stitched up private areas....for TWO WEEKS!!!! Are you kidding me?!?!)

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In fact, it took Duke less than two hours after we came home to start his favorite pasttime (you know...what boy dogs do...). So, we called the vet to possibly get one of those "head cone" things to deter him from his "hobby"; however, she recommended just putting some panties on him to get him to stop (yes, you read that right....panties). So, not to be all inappropriate and weird, here's a picture Duke wearing a pair of panties (with a hole cut out in the back for his tail):

Yeah, I know, it's just not right that I shared this picture, is it? I know, I know, I am a terrible person. It was all I could do not to just break down and get a bad case of the giggles after I put them on him, but I didn't want to hurt his feelings. Poor little guy...he's really sensitive, too (he is the lover between the two I see *June 12th post*).

Lookin' for (duck) love in all the wrong places...

July 11, 2013

As you already know (if you are a regular reader of our ramblings), our ducks, Frik and Frak, are males. Well, let me tell you, the two of them have grown up to be quite handsome and eligible young men (or drakes, if you want to be all technical). The two of them share a decked out bachelor pad (*see April 24th post*) and live a carefree life, but like any bachelor, Frik and Frak are ready to meet some ladies (the chicken posse have put both of them in the dreaded "friend zone").

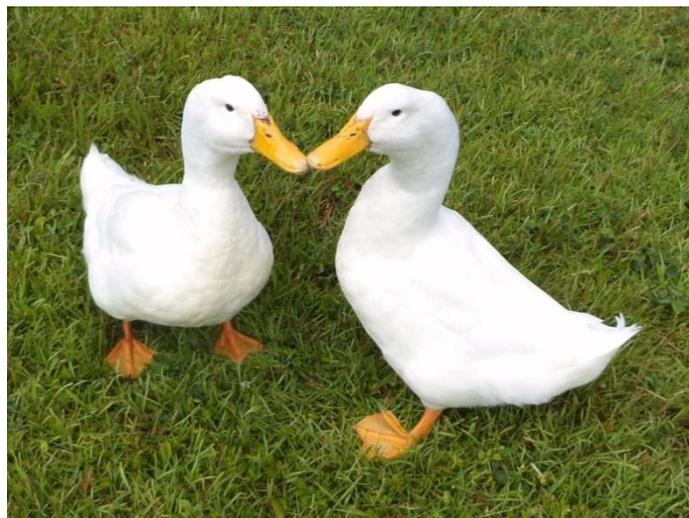
So, yesterday, after much pleading from both of them (mostly Frik) to get some "fine-looking women" (his words) to come on over and live at the homestead with them, I put out an ad for them in Craigslist. They also wanted me to put the word out here, too. So, here's a recent picture of them:

So, if you know of any "fine-looking (duck) women" between the ages of 3-18 months (both are fine with older women) that:

like Pina Colodas and getting caught in the rain.

If they're not into yoga and have half a brain.

If they like romantic waddles along the (pond) shore...



...then do we have a perfect match. Seriously, if you know of any female ducks that would be willing to share the rest of their lives with these two really nice guys, sight unseen, PLEASE let us know. ASAP!

Deep Thoughts While Shoveling Poo

July 12, 2013

This morning, while I was out scooping up poo and hosing down the floor and walls of the chicken house and duck den, my mind started to wander. When you are doing these types of tasks (you know, the REALLY messy ones), it really is a good time to allow yourself to contemplate stuff...you know, like the difference between being dirty and not being clean.

Living out on a farm, you REALLY have to get used to being dirty...like ALL of the time. And I don't mean the, "I just woke up and I feel unfresh. I think I'll go take a shower." I mean the, "I just washed this shirt (or took a shower) and I now have mud all over me. Damn it." There is a difference between being dirty and not being clean. So, I've made peace with the fact that I might be dirty, but I am DEFINITELY clean....if that makes any sense.

Anyway, after awhile, my dirty-versus-clean thoughts turned to our choice to live the "simple life." You know, it's really not all that simple. Now, don't get me wrong, neither one of us regret our decision to move out here, but the simple life does NOT translate as an easy life--by any means. It's kinda hard...(and we are no where near where we plan to be [We are transitioning our city-to country-life in phases.]).

Take, for instance, cleaning the duck den. We have only two ducks, but they poop anywhere and everywhere (maybe because they are both bachelors???? [see June 24th post]). It's slimy and stinky and mushy, especially in the sweltering July heat of South-central Florida. Nevertheless, you gotta clean it up....thoroughly and often. It doesn't matter if you clean it up at 5 AM or 5 PM, it's July and it's Florida...so, naturally, it's hot and it's buggy...therefore, it is very unpleasant. But, you gotta do what you gotta do~so, you slather on equal amounts of bug spray and sunscreen; grab a flat-edged shovel, rake, wheelbarrow, and rubber boots; and get to to work.

So, I'm out there...shoveling and thinking, shoveling and thinking...wondering:

"What is the meaning of life?"

"What is my purpose?"

"What do I want to do?"

"Who do I want to be?"

I become all metaphysical--you know, thinking all deep thoughts and stuff--become totally entranced in my own thoughts.



and

Then, all of a sudden, a duck comes up behind me and gooses me right on my ass (well, not really my ass, that part of my back that peeks between my shorts and wife-beater [Yes, I proudly wore a wife-beater.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Don't judge me.1). It hurt, too. Frik (or Frak) snapped me right back into reality. My metaphysical trance turned into thoughts of:

"I am getting eaten up by these damn skeeters (mosquitos) and no-see-ums (ceratopogoniidae)."

"God, I'm hungry."

"What can I make for lunch?"

"What am I going to make for dinner?"

and then my killer, final thought...

"I think some of that overspray just got in my mouth. Ick! There's duck poo in my mouth."

So, that ended that task pretty quickly.

Anyway, cleaning up after farm animals is a NEVER ENDING **task** (I use *task* instead of *chore* because chore sounds too negative). I am not kidding, you could spend all morning cleaning, spit-shining, rearranging, etc., etc., and by the next day, you wouldn't even be able to tell. HOWEVER, go for a few days and NOT clean up...you can *totally* tell, trust me.

I guess clean on a farm is more of an olfactory perception rather than a visual one. To put it bluntly, we live among a lot of various animal excreta around here--A LOT of it. And, as I mentioned before, it's Florida and it's July, therefore, a simple mathematical equation is always proven true:

HEAT+POOP=BUGS/FUNK (or H+P=B/F)

So, what am I going to do? Live on a bug-infested, funky-smelling farm? I think not. So, I will slather on equal amounts of bug spray and sunscreen; grab a flat-edged shovel, rake, wheelbarrow, and rubber boots; and get to work.

Puppy post-op *UPDATE*

July 17, 2013

If you have been wondering how the puppies are doing after their surgeries last week (*see July 8th post*), both are doing quite well. In fact, **much** better than we anticipated. It is all we can do to keep *Crazy Daisy* and *Duke Hefner* from rough housing all over the place. They seem even more into "play" fighting than they did before their surgeries. Nevertheless, I caught a moment of silence between the two:



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We haven't seen too much of them sleeping--right next to each other--and not one of them antagonizing the other one. Sort of cute, huh?

Duke is now weighing in at around 40 pounds and Daisy around 36. We have heard various opinions of their final adult weights to be anywhere from 40 to 80 pounds; however, a doggy expert we know assured us that she sees them ending up weighing around the mid-50s. We like her assessment so, we are sticking with it.

Also, over the weekend, we found a few of their puppy teeth on the floor. So, if you are a dog person, you will appreciate this picture (and if you're not, it will disgust you):

Neither of us had ever adopted puppies this young so, we had never seen puppy teeth (I put them next to a nickel to demonstrate how tiny they are). They were just on the floor. I guess puppy teeth just fall out--whenever, wherever. It's a little weird, but considering all of the other weird crap (and when I write crap, I mean metaphorically and literally [see *July 11th post*]) we find around outside, a few puppy baby teeth are NOTHING!



A fine line between a hug and swat on the butt

July 19, 2013

Do you ever have one of those days that you wonder, "*How can I love my dogs (or kids or husband or ferret or whatever pertains to you) yet, at the same time, want to beat the ever lovin' snot (something my grandma used to say to me when I did something to piss her off) out of them?*" Well, I am having one of those days.



Earlier, I spent the majority of my day filling in a very long, fairly deep ditch that we previously dug last week (we fitted water pipes and electric conduit out to the chicken/duck complex). Believe me, it was NOT an easy task--moving dirt BACK to where it was in the first place in the sweltering heat (I had to before the sky opened up to our regularly scheduled mid-afternoon storm). I was sort of meditating (like when I shovel poo [see *July 11th post*])--working up a really good sweat from a somewhat decent workout...and I walk in the house to this:

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Nice, huh?

Not.

I hold them both equally responsible.

And yesterday, I was just bragging to my mom how good they are.

I spoke too soon.

Arrgh.

Six of one, half dozen of the other...

July 25, 2013

Today, the ladies (the chicken posse) laid 6 eggs! An all time record here at the farm. For the past few weeks (for however long they have been laying eggs), we have been getting 1, 2, sometimes 3 (one time, 4) eggs per day, but today...6...and 2 of them are double-yolkers (one egg that has 2 yolks inside; sort of like twins). We usually know when one of our ladies is squeezing one of those out; she squawks a little louder and a little longer. Ouch.

Our little ladies sure have grown up...and are we going to be eating some eggs around here.

People Pox

July 31, 2013

Today we have a grand total of EIGHT eggs!!!! Can you believe it!?! And three of them were double-yolkers (see *July 25th post*). The hen posse appears to be happy and healthy even though we are pretty sure we have a mild case of fowl pox running among our flock (or brood). We had never heard of it (and no one ever told us about it).

So, after a MINOR freakout ("OMG, am I not keeping their cage clean?", "Am I a bad chickie-parent?", "Holy Jesus, we've been eating their eggs! Are we going to die?"), we discovered after A LOT of research (you know, on the Internet machine) it doesn't seem like fowl pox is all that bad (damn mosquitos). It's more of a nuisance than anything else. No one is going to die from it (unless they are tiny little chickie babies or old). However, their egg laying might be hindered for a bit (but we did get eight eggs today).

I guess *fowl pox* is like a “reverse” chicken pox (we get the chicken pox; they get fowl pox--honestly, we should call it “people pox”). Our poor little ladies will have some black spots on their combs, but they will fall off (ick) and be okay in a couple of weeks (plus, they will develop an immunity to never catch it again). I guess if they were going to catch it, this was the best time for them to get it (sort of like this South Park episode).

Who knew?



Daisy: Undercover Duck Agent (Duke: Uninterested Bystander)

August 8, 2013

Life at the farm is as expected in Florida during the (nearly) mid-August weather--again proving my theory that $H+P=B/F$ (see July 11th, “Deep Thoughts While Shoveling Poo” post for full explanation of my $H+P=B/F$ theorem). And my theory is especially true when it comes to the ducks, more specifically the duck shit. Holy Mother-of-God, gnats and flies SWARM around those juicy piles of poo (again, see July 11th post [paragraph 4] for full details on duck poo, a 180 from my duckLING poo assessment [see March 27th post]).



It is amazing that Frik and Frak remain as white as the driven snow while wallowing in their filthy stank. Their cage (oops, I mean their bachelor pad [see April 23rd post]) is beyond ripe...it's vile. Regardless of how many times or how thoroughly we clean it (and we do, EVERY day), it is still just dreadful.

Many people ask us why we still keep Frik and Frak around (or when we are having them for dinner...and when I mean dinner, I don't mean inviting them in for pizza). I don't know, as much as they piss me off (pooping on my sidewalks, harassing the hens, pecking (incessantly) on my front door, following me around then running away when I want to pick them up, etc., etc.), the two of them still have a tender spot in our heart. I cannot even begin to explain why, but they do.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

Daisy also has a tender spot for them in her heart (or maybe she just considers them to be playmates, as Duke tires of her quite easily anymore).

Awhile back, I was concerned that Frik and Frak would gang up on (Crazy) Daisy and goose the shit out of (or kill) her because they were bigger than her. Well, now that she is bigger than the ducks (Daisy is tipping scales at right around 40 pounds, Duke, 43-ish pounds), I thought that she might tear them up (I wasn't so worried about Duke (Hefner [see *June 12th post*] as he is more interested licking himself [see *July 8th post*] or napping).

I know it may not be the most responsible "pet-parent" thing to do--letting Daisy and Frik and Frak have their version of the WWE throwdown in our backyard--but seriously, it's kind of fun to watch (so don't report us to PETA or anything). Anyway, the ducks are having just as much fun as Daisy (plus they're working out some of their "frustration" of not having any "fine-looking ladies" living around here [see *July 11th, "Looking for Duck Love in all the Wrong Places" post*]). Unfortunately, we have not found a suitable match for the boys (well, we found a pair of sisters, but it wasn't a love connection for Frak; he can be quite picky).

So, our evening entertainment around here (after we corral the hen posse back home) is letting the ducks and dogs out and watching them (well, really watching Daisy and the ducks--Duke typically is licking himself or napping) tossle back and forth.

That makes it official....we're country people.

March of the Ants

August 13, 2013

Do you know what this is:

IT is a fire ant and they are the bane of our existence at Ginger Goat Farm. Go ahead and Google "*Fire Ant Bite Images*." I DARE you...no I double-dog dare you. And, if you're feeling a little daring, go ahead and Google "*Fire Ant Bite Puppy Images*." I'll be right here when you get back...

Now that you looked...they are both disgusting and disturbing, aren't they? Fire ants are the most contemptible creatures on the planet. Plus, those little



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mo-fo's aren't even native to this area. The little SOB's hopped on a ship from Argentina about 80 years ago and have no intention of ever going back.

I hate them...I really, REALLY hate them.

Do you want to know WHY I hate them so much?



If it looks like it hurts, it's because it does. Dang-it. I thought I was being REALLY careful when I was herding the chickens this morning! You almost can't be careful enough out here. Like I have expressed before...we are so happy living here and wouldn't change one thing (except, of course, these stupid bugs). I guess we have to consider them one of the hazards of living out here. It's crazy that these little buggers are so destructive (and PAINFUL).

Anyway, it's just not the actual bite that hurts, it also torments you (and itches) FOR DAYS. One bite is bad enough, but when you get 4 or more....they will just about drive you *crazy*. If you never have had the experience (good fortune) of being bitten by one (or many) of these little scuzzballs...let me help you out. Imagine innocently walking around your yard (or walking on the sidewalk, sitting on a chair, etc.), minding your own business...then, all of a sudden--out of nowhere--it feels like someone is injecting a hypodermic needle (if you're "lucky," it's just one hypodermic needle) filled with hot pepper sauce directly into your foot/leg/arm...wherever...it doesn't matter.

It burns like crazy for a while and you put baking soda (or whatever other "remedy" is out there) on it to try to alleviate the pain. But let's face it, nothing really works. So, you sort of just "suck it up," take a Benadryl (or drink a cocktail, or two), and sleep it off for a few hours.

When you finally wake up, you TRY not to scratch it....and you're really good about not touching it...for about a day. Then at about 3 o'clock in the morning that next night, you feel like you are going to lose your everloving mind if you don't scratch the shit out of that bite (or most usually, bites). So, you scratch and scratch and scratch because you realize, it really doesn't matter.

You are left with a welt (or welts) for about a week (regardless if you pop the blister or not). Then, when it FINALLY goes away....you get bit again!

Pinky Tuscaero

August 17, 2013

Months ago, when Billy and I brought the baby chickens to the homestead, he made me PROMISE not to name any of the chickens. If you are a regular reader of our ramblings over the past (almost) year (crazy,

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Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

isn't it?), I have a strange habit of naming most (if not all) of the animals (domesticated as well as native) around here. We have *Special Fred* (the catfish), *Frik* and *Frak* (the ducks), *The Crane Family* (the redheaded crane posse), and, of course, *Daisy* and *Duke*, but they don't really count because they're puppies. His reasoning for me to not name the animals is because if I name them, I personify them and get all "weird" about them. It's a very complicated subject and I prefer to not delve into it here and now.

Anyway, unfortunately, one of the hens has a total "girl crush" on me...*Pinky Tuscahero* (and I have a total girl crush on her, too. I can't help it, she is SO sweet). She follows me all around the yard, squats next to my feet--begging to be picked up and petted, and sings to me. I just love her. Look at her; isn't she a sweetheart?



We named her *Pinky Tuscahero* because, about a month ago, I was painting a pole in the chicken house (a pole to hold up the waterer and feeder, not a stripper pole...they're not those kind of girls) hot pink (why not?) and I accidentally splattered a few drops on one of the hens. It's not a lot of pink paint, just a few drips on her left shoulder; it's kind of cute, actually. Anyway, it is enough paint that allows us to distinguish her from the rest of the girls.

If you have ever heard of or watched *Happy Days*, you know that *Pinky Tuscahero* was one of *Fonzie's* girlfriends. *Happy Days*, as well as *I Love Lucy* and *Brady Bunch* reruns were my "babysitter" when I was a little kid after school and on rainy summer afternoons. Don't judge me, I was a little kid and I flipping LOVED those shows (Now, not so much...about a month ago, I became all nostalgic [for some reason] and attempted to watch them on Netflix. You know what? Other than *I Love Lucy*, they're all pretty much awful. Who says that TV shows were better "back in the day" than now? Go try to watch an episode of *H.R. Pufnstuf*...you will want to stab sharp objects into your eyes and ears. It is THAT bad.).

So, I feel sort of bad because I kind of backpedaled on one of my promises to *Billy*...I can't keep falling in love with these animals...regardless of how cute they are.

Foot fetish

August 29, 2013



Excellent news! Frik and Fraκ are now all about the pond....finally.

However, we still cannot trust them to be around the chicken posse (see *June 24th post*). So, to solve that little problem, we let the chickens and the ducks out in "shifts" (chickens in the morning, ducks in the late afternoon). It works out pretty smoothly, but herding both groups in can be a little time-consuming and is not all that easy of a task.

Unfortunately, Daisy hasn't developed into the little herder that we thought she would become (see *June 12th post*). In fact, it seems she has taken Duke's lead and would rather just lie around and watch the hens (and "throwdown" with the ducks [see August 8th post], but she's really lost interest in that, too). I guess, it's better than her trying to kill them.

Because our hens are SO passive, we really can't herd them...they just sit and squat whenever Billy or I step near them:

However, their sitting and squatting makes it next to impossible to herd them back home. All we end up doing is poking them in the rear with a herding stick while they hunker down, begging for us to pick them up and pet them. We almost feel cruel when we do it so, we carry each one back to the coop. **Our girls aren't spoiled or anything* (insert sarcastic tone here)!* It could be worse, right? They are sweet, though.



The ducks, on the other hand, are PO'd that:

1. The hens put them in the "Friend Zone" (see *July 11th post*),
2. There STILL aren't any "fine looking ladies" waddling around here, and (probably the biggest offender),
3. We moved their "Bachelor Pad" to another zip code within Ginger Goat Farm (away from the hens, closer to the pond).

Herding Frik and Fraκ back home in the evening is nothing like herding the hens back to their home. They are independent little buggers and want nothing to do with a herding stick (and nothing to do with being picked up by Billy and/or me). We had to get creative to corral them back home every evening. One little weakness we know about both of these guys is that they have a serious foot fetish. For reals. They cannot get enough of feet, specifically women's feet with painted toenails (Fraκ especially loves red polish). So (I

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Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

hate to admit this), every evening, I have to go down to the pond and entice Frik and Frak out of the pond by flashing my bare feet.

I almost feel cheap...but it works.

Popeye the Sailorman

September 10, 2013

More good news from Ginger Goat Farm. Last week we bought an adjacent lot; increasing the the size of our homestead another acre and a half. It's a gorgeous parcel of land...about 2/3rds of it is cleared plus a small creek runs through, bordering a cypress grove. Although the land looks exactly the same from before we bought it, we look at it differently knowing that it is now a part of Ginger Goat Farm. We are so excited, one more lot and we qualify for agricultural zoning.

In fact, the day after we bought it, we took Big Blue out to bushhog along the perimeter (as best we could) of the property. It was exhilarating...until I was bit by a deerfly on my lower left arm (at least we think it was a deerfly). It really didn't hurt, at first, but later that evening...OH MY GOD!!! As much as I bitch and moan about the fire ants around here, it PALES to a deerfly (or whatever) bite. (In fact, I painted this sign on some scrap wood and hung it out by the chicken coop:)



(Personally, I don't understand why people wear flip flops to a farm...not only are there fire ants, but the ducks with their foot fetish along with the piles of poo we have around here...ick...I want to have my feet securely covered, but that's me...)



Later that same evening, I looked like Popeye the Sailorman (toot toot)...at least on my left side.

It was miserable. I tried to "tough it out"...at first...but it was just too much for me. I HATE HATE HATE to take Benadryl because it knocks me out for the whole day (and I have things to do), but there is just a point where you have to relinquish the fight and just do what you have to do and sleep it off.

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Let sleeping birds lie

September 17, 2013



Rainy day out here at the homestead (and do we need it!). In typical Florida fashion, the rain comes in bursts, not a solid, steady one. So, it's a bit funny to watch the chicken posse dodge in and out of their coup to avoid getting wet. During the last outburst, a couple of the hens missed out on the group run back to the coup and had to wait it out on the front porch:

They don't seem too worried. I think in my next life I want to come back as a hen (but definitely as one

of OUR hens...not one from Tyson Chicken Farms or something like that).

Outside tasks will have to wait today.

RIP Frak 2013-2013

September 24, 2013



I have some really sad news to report from Ginger Goat Farm. One night last week, one of our ducks, Frak, met his untimely death. A bobcat (or what we assume was a bobcat) ripped off Frak's head. Yes, it was as gruesome as it sounds. As a courtesy, I will NOT post any photos of the carnage (but I will repost a few of his baby pictures here...sigh):

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Anyway, to make a long story, short (and not too disturbing), the morning after the crime, Billy went out to check on the ducks (like we do every morning). As he walked closer, he noticed only one duck. After he got a little closer to the duck den, he saw Frik literally shaking from fright in one corner and a clump of feathers and blood splattered on the side of their townhouse. Frak's body was still in the duck den--minus his head (and most of his neck)--with blood everywhere. The side of the cage was pretty bowed out from where (again, we assume) Frak stuck his head out and was (probably) "telling" the bobcat who was "boss" around here (between Frik and Frak--Frak was definitely the alpha male). Well, the bobcat didn't want to hear any of Frak's nonsense and ripped (and probably ate) his head right off. Unfortunately (or quite possibly, fortunately), his head is still nowhere to be found.

As you can imagine, poor Frik was wandering around in a catatonic state. He just witnessed the extremely graphic murder of his brother. So for some company, we decided to let him free range with the chicken posse that morning (rather than making him stay in the "House of Horrors"). Remember when I explained that we had to keep the ducks and the chickens separated because the ducks (primarily Frak) kept picking on the hens (see *August 29th post*)? Well, let me tell you, Frik was the calmest duck I have ever seen. He just wandered around the yard with the chicken posse like he was another hen...he was practically nuzzling (rather than mounting) them.

So after Billy gave Frak a proper memorial (threw some feathers in the pond and turned on the fountain), we decided now is the time to find Frik the long overdue promise of "a fine looking woman" (see *July 11th post [Looking for duck love in all the wrong places]*). After a few phone calls, we found Frik a mate--Fran.

Cute name, huh? Well, let me explain to you why her name is Fran (and it's not because it sounds cute [Frik and Fran], although it does). Fran has the loudest, most nasal-y sounding quack you have ever heard. If Fran was a person, she would sound (and probably look) like this:



Remember her? Her quack almost exactly sounds like that laugh. Honest.

We are not exactly sure if Frik is happier with Fran than with Frak. When Frak was around, Frik was constantly battling Frak being the alpha male (if you know what I mean, wink wink). And now with Fran, he almost seems like one of those old guys you see at a department store with their equally old wives. You've seen them, those old guys walking behind their constantly chattering wives, not listening to a word, just shaking their heads up and down and once in a while they say, "Yes, dear."

That's Frik's life now. He went from swinging bachelor (with a pretty mean roommate [see *April 23rd post*]) to a settled-down family man. Is that a good or bad thing? I don't know.

All I do know is that things are A LOT calmer around here and that I am grateful that Billy was the one who found Frak.

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Step-by-Step

October 2, 2013

In our (slow) march to become self-sufficient, we have (finally) installed the water solar panels (that's why we were digging and filling in ditches around here awhile back I see *July 19th post!*) We will now have water heated by the sun rather than using grid power. One significant step closer to our dream of hippie-dom (well, our version of hippies...we still plan to enjoy our daily bathing and shaving, a good ol' hamburger once in a while, Netflix, etc., etc.). How exciting! Here are the solar panels:

We decided to put them at the back of the property, behind the chicken coop, rather than on the roof for several reasons:

1. We have plenty of space.
2. We really didn't want to drill holes into our roof to secure them down (with the rain and hurricanes occurring around here).
3. When we build our chicken run (because even though we love that the girls free-range, they are TEARING UP my garden and yard and they shit everywhere [and it's all I can do to keep Daisy and Duke from eating it--which, by the way, Duke is now weighing in at a stout 52 pounds and Daisy is a svelte 47]), the panels will provide the girls/hens some shade.



The panels are passive which means that water (literally) flows through little channels within the panel that is heated by the sun (because they're black and black absorbs heat. Yes, Jeff Foxworthy, I AM smarter than a 5th grader). We are still researching ways we can use the sun to power the house (i.e. the A/C, the microwave, lights, you know, the important stuff...). Like I stated before, this is "our" version of hippie-dom...it may not be yours, but whatever.

Speaking of the hens...OMG, they are still SO CUTE. We can't go anywhere without them following us around. Yesterday, one of them followed me into the house (yes, it was Pinky Tuscadero I see *August 17th post!*). I wasn't really paying any attention and she just snuck right on in. And while I do love them (and I love collecting fresh eggs...amazingly, we usually get 10 every day. We have some happy girls), I don't want them in my house; I do draw the line somewhere.

Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

What I especially love about the hens is that they don't judge me on the "fabulous" footwear I wear around the homestead. I think I mentioned before that we have special shoes (that we keep in a bin right outside by the backdoor) that we wear in the chicken coop and duck den that are not to be worn--ever--in the house. My super seductive rubber boots (see *December 29th, 2012 post*) that I bought from Walmart (don't judge me) a while back are in this bin as well as these sexy babies:



And, yes, you are correct...those are Crocs...and they are not even real Crocs...even better, they are the imitation kind. I found them on a clearance rack in the boys' department (yep, at Walmart) for 3 bucks (even my \$14 boots can't beat that). And if you look at the picture of my titillating slip-on sandals, the girls even love my shoes.

I mean those hens are the best...they feed me, they love me, and they don't judge me.

More (Mis)Adventures of the Dynamic Duo

October 19, 2013

Yesterday, while running errands, Daisy and Duke (aka the Dynamic Duo) were at it again:

Nice, huh? Not. (Daisy is on the left, Duke is on the right)

If you remember a couple of months ago (see *July 19th post*), D & D played their little "let's destroy something while they're gone" game before.

Ultimately, we will never know which one of these little "angels" are fully responsible as the instigator of these "little" games, but we DO know that this cushion WAS in (Crazy) Daisy's crate and that SHE is the one who needs "doggie downers" because of her "nerve" problem. I'm not kidding.



A few of weeks ago, Billy was traveling a lot for work and Daisy was--to put it gently--an absolute hot mess. She had nightly (really runny) diarrhea and behaved like she just didn't feel good. She moped around the house, stared out the window, and slept a lot (but sometimes, she would just run around and around in circles for no apparent reason. It was really weird.).

After about 3 very early mornings of cleaning up watery (and very stinky) steaks of puppy poo all over the living room, I decided I needed to take her to the vet, stat. So, I took her (and Duke) to the vet, extremely

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Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

worried that something was wrong with her. After a battery of (expensive) tests, we found NOTHING wrong with her; she just missed Billy. Can you believe that happy crap? I spent \$140 to find out that one of our puppies is co-dependent on Billy (and I am convinced she is also bipolar [Click [HERE](#), [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#)]).

So, I guess we can't call her Crazy Daisy anymore because she REALLY is crazy. I have the paperwork (and medications) to prove it.

The 3-3-4 Corollary

October 15, 2013

You know, I learn something new (or disprove something I thought I knew) everyday out here on the homestead. Yesterday afternoon turned into one of those days that I disproved something that I thought I already knew. Did you know that chickens (or really *A* chicken) will wander off from the flock? And when I say wander, I don't mean a few hundred feet, I mean like a mile away.

Yesterday started out like any other day...Billy was out-and-about taking care of some business and I was at home, working on the computer, interspersed with some tasks that needed to be done outside...

Before I go any further with my story, I have to admit a little crazy habit I always do around here. I am not sure if it is OCD or anything, but it is something I find myself doing EVERY time I go outside...I count chickens. And when I say I count chickens, I don't go around and count them like you normally would, you know "1-2-3...to 10". Oh no, I go "1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3-4". What the heck is that about? Seriously, is that weird or what?

Every flipping time I go outside, I count them.

"1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3-4".

"1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3-4".

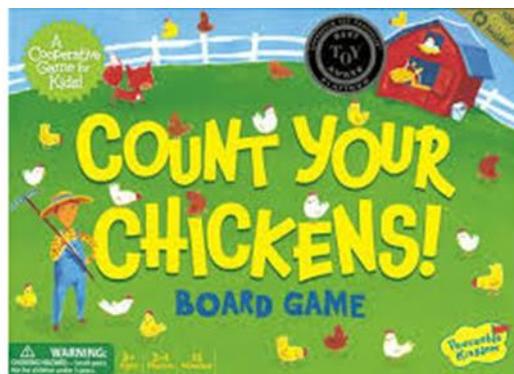
I just can't help myself. I just do it.

Anyway, yesterday afternoon I was transitioning from "inside" work to "outside" work, saw the chickens, and started my freaky little "1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3-4" craziness; however THIS time it wasn't "1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3-4", it was "1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3".

You recognize the difference here, don't you? It was 1-2-3", "1-2-3", "1-2-3...and **NO 4**...no matter how many times I counted them there was NO 4 on my last count. I started to freak out a little bit. Where's the fourth chicken around here (I know it's really the 10th chicken, but I was working on my count)? Where

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Ginger Goat Farm, by Angela Shoe

could she be? After our duck drama a few weeks ago (see *September 24th post*) and with all of the eagles, hawks, and owls we have hanging around here (see *March 5th post*), I started to wonder if something swooped down and grabbed one of our girls for a late afternoon snack. It made me sad. It didn't matter how many times I did my crazy count, I couldn't make a "4" happen.

Then, that's when it started to get really crazy. I started going around the homestead calling for the chicken...you know calling out, "C'mon sweetie", "Here chickie, chickie" in a high-pitched voice for like an hour (OMG, I am turning into one of those crazy chicken ladies!).

Nothing.

I started to make peace with the fact that she probably was in the belly of one of those bald eagles we saw perched up on a cypress tree last weekend. I was very sad. So, in my melancholy state, I started to walk towards the mailbox to retrieve our mail (our mailbox is a quarter-of-a-mile from our house; it's a bit of a hike) and passed one of my neighbors (all of our neighbors are totally cool) who has a couple of chickens (roosters) himself. So I casually asked him how his roosters were doing and if for any reason he had happened to see any of our girls....and you know what? He did. About an hour or so earlier.

Can you believe that happy crap? One of our girls (now named "The Wanderer"...or "Ho-bag" [she was hanging around his roosters]) scrambled--alone--all the way to our neighbor's house (about a quarter-of-a-mile down the dirt road), hung out with his roosters, and then wandered off again. He hadn't seen her for awhile, but he told me that he would give me a call if he did.

About an hour later, he called me back and told me he saw "Ho-bag" scratching around for bugs behind his horse barn. I was so excited. I ran over to his house, gave him a great big hug, and started calling for her (of course she didn't pay any attention to me). So, I dodged huge piles of horse poo to get over to her. Of course as soon as she saw me she squatted for me to pick her up and I carried little "Ho-bag" home.

Happy ending to a crazy little chicken story. Even crazier...we got 11 eggs today!

A Delicate Situation

October 30, 2013

I haven't posted anything for awhile; it's not because nothing has been going on--quite the contrary--we have been super busy pulling it together around the homestead. Among some of the things we have done include (finally) containing the chickens in a *luxurious* run of their own (i.e. we can now start a garden without them scratching/digging the hell out of it), hooking up the water solar panels, installing a [PV system](#) (it's not quite done yet, but we are on our way!), and just all around cleaning up around here.

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All of the animals are doing well. We think that Frik and Fran might have "[gotten it on](#)" (finally! [see *September 24th post*]). A few mornings ago, I was out doing my morning chores and--I am pretty sure--I saw Frik ON Fran in the pond. Which is excellent news on so many levels because:

1. Maybe he will stop raping my hens (or whatever he is trying to do...they don't like it, and neither does Fran).
2. Fran will stop (or at least curtail) her incessant quacking.
3. They will now hang out on the pond (their "love shack") and quit hanging around the front porch, pecking on the front door and shitting everywhere.
4. We might have baby ducklings soon (and NOTHING is cuter than baby ducklings).

The hens are doing great. Still squatting whenever we come near them (see *August 29th post*) and laying 9/10 eggs everyday. We are eating A LOT of eggs and egg-type foods around here (I am actually cooking EDIBLE foods!). In fact, here's a picture of a spinach quiche I made awhile back:



It was actually quite delicious...and it wasn't a fluke! I made it twice and both times it was good. I am quite proud of myself because I am not that great of a cook. Honestly, I am quite terrible at it (there are lots of reasons why; they just culminate all together and create this hailstorm [me] in the kitchen.

Anyway, I'll quit beating around the bush. I have to admit we have one *small* problem around here. It's a *delicate situation*.

It's Duke.

He smells.

REALLY bad (I wish I could hyperlink a "scratch-n-sniff" to this post to give you an idea of how bad it is). I can't even begin to describe the odor he emits (maybe rotten eggs, mixed with mildew, mixed with dirty hippie hair...and a dash of dead fish. It's dreadful).

We have no idea what to do. Now that the weather has (finally) started to cool off around here, we have transitioned most of our work to outside chores (as you read at the beginning of this post), which means we let Daisy and Duke run around and be puppies. It's awesome. They run, play, swim in the pond, roll around in the wetlands. It's so cute and we love to watch them. However, after just a day (maybe just even an hour of it), Duke is RANK beyond explanation. Daisy isn't, but Duke...a totally different story.

If you remember, quite a while back, Billy took "charge" of Daisy (well, as best as you can "take charge" of Crazy Daisy) and I took Duke (see *May 28th post*). And I'll be honest with you, I totally thought I got the better end of the deal...as Daisy is absolutely nuts. I do love him (and Daisy) with all of my heart, but it is extremely difficult to snuggle with your puppy when he smells like:

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1. rotten eggs
2. mildew
3. dirty hippie hair
4. dead fish

All rolled into one.

I've tried everything...baths everyday (I know that isn't good for him), Fabreeze (I know that isn't good for him, either), dryer sheets...anything and everything. He still stinks, but look at him:

(Duke is on the left, Daisy is on the right [he is now around 58 lbs., she's around 50]).



I mean, c'mon, look at those puppy faces. It melts your heart, but unfortunately Duke also melts your nose (and sometimes almost makes your eyes water). I am hoping that he is like most teenage boys I know...they stink (usually like Doritos, dirty feet/shoes, Old Spice, and mold)...and they grow out of it (usually after they graduate from college). Are teenage puppies the same? He is almost 10 months old.

Wouldn't that make him kind of a "tweener"?

He should grow out of it, right? I hope so because these nightly baths are killing me (and he isn't all that fond of them, either).

Wow...it's been awhile since I last posted...

December 19, 2013

October 30? Sheesh, time flies. It's been a blur these past weeks (err...months). Seriously. Nothing really earth shattering has been going on, just enough that everytime I get ready to sit down and post (and/or feel inspired by something that happened around here), something else diverts my attention (who knows?...it might be an unexpected, later-in-life onslaught of ADHD). Whatever, I apologize for not sharing some of our stories lately. I WON'T let it happen again.

Well, about a month ago we celebrated our one year anniversary here at Ginger Goat Farm, and like every other event that occurs in life, the anticipation of the date was more exciting than the actual day. I don't mean to sound all "Negative Nancy," but I think you know what I mean. For example, think about your

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graduation day (from high school, college, 8th grade, whatever...). Remember how much you couldn't wait for that day to come? And then, when it did happen...after it all happened...you were sort of like, "*Meh!*"

Our one year anniversary for Ginger Goat Farm was a day like any other day out here...taking care of the animals and trying to (still) get a handle on everything. Daisy and Duke (the Dynamic Duo) are HUGE. Duke is over 60 lbs. (62ish) and Daisy is over 50 lbs. (54ish). I just snapped a pic of them earlier today:



Daisy (or Crazy) is in the foreground giving you her sexiest pose with her come-hither eyes and Duke (or Stinky, *see the last post*) is in the background with his size 15 ears (on a size 8 body), probably farting up a storm (that dog has a natural born "gift"). They're good dogs (hard to believe in a month in a half they will be YEAR OLD!). They no longer sleep in crates. They sleep on the floor, next to our bed every night (and Duke "dutifully" licks my face every morning at 6AM to let me know it's time to wake up).

The chicken posse are happy girls. Just about everyday we get 10 eggs--which is pretty good considering we are heading into winter (shorter days usually mean less egg production). They still squat and want to be picked up whenever we go near them.

Frik and Fran are fat and sassy. Fran has laid an egg pretty much everyday for the past month (unfertilized, which is weird because we see them "gettin' it on" just about every morning on the pond, *see last post*). Duck eggs *sorta* taste like chicken eggs, but not really. Last week, I made a pumpkin pie with some (*epic fail*). Every once in awhile, I fry/scramble some ducks eggs--we can barely tell the difference (they're more "yolky"). We heard that we could sell those suckers for a BUCK a piece, that might be our new business... Duck eggs are huge:



FYI: The chicken egg (the brown ones) are large eggs (we can barely fit it in a standard egg carton). Yeah--that's how big a duck egg is (and the yolk is more orange than yellow).

Well, I have to go clean a duck house (because, unfortunately, they just don't clean themselves). Next post, I'll share with you some of our adventures in cooking (because if we are going to grab a hold of this whole homesteading thing, we [well, really mostly me, Billy is a really good cook] have to start cooking and eating the stuff around here).

CORRECTION: DUKE IS 59 LBS. AND DAISY IS 51 LBS.

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Happy Holidays!

December 26, 2013

A very warm, relaxing, and safe Holiday Season:



From The Wanderer (and us) to you!

(Keeping this hat on her head long enough to take a picture was NOT easy!)

Ginger Goat Spa (for hens)

January 1, 2014

Happy New Year!

I am thrilled to write that I have a garden started...finally. As I have expressed before, gardening has been *challenging* out here (*see April 10, 2013 post*). Well, with the weather finally cooling off around here, I have a bonafide garden. Hooray!

As of right now, I have (successfully) started:

- Lettuce
- Green peppers
- Cauliflower
- Brussel sprouts (don't care, yummy)
- Green snap peas
- Tomatoes
- Green onions
- Some herbs (rosemary, mint, and lavender so far...)
- And, oddly enough, potatoes (from some sprouts on an old potato I had lying around)

And I have killed, thus far:

- Cucumbers
- Carrots
- Spinach
- Tomatoes (some made it, some didn't)

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Just give me time, I am sure other plants will meet their demise. I am really digging (no pun intended) gardening--IN THE WINTER--out here. When summer rolls around again, maybe I will be better equipped to give it another go (or not).

Also, I have story I want to share.

Well, I **think** I do. It's sort of embarrassing...

Oh, what the hell, I'll share it with you.

A couple of days ago, I noticed one of our chickens started limping around the yard. Nothing too terrible--she was still scratching around for bugs and grass along with the other girls, but she was noticeably hobbling behind. After a couple of days, her gimp appeared to be worse. So, like any other (clueless) concerned homesteader, I Googled "limping chicken" to figure out what was wrong with her. I also learned a few other things:

1. I'm not AS crazy as some [other people](#) raising chickens.
2. An egg stuck up a hen's butt can cause limping (and I needed to stick my finger up there to find out [ummmm....NO]).
3. [Bumblefoot](#) sounds really painful (she doesn't have that).

So, using deductive reasoning after my thorough research on this topic (and really wanting to avoid sticking my finger up her butt), I came to the conclusion that she bruised her leg jumping up and down the roosting bar (or tripped over something in the yard). So, to help her ailing leg, I gave our limping hen--now named **Princess Gimpy**, (not to be confused with **Pinky Tuscardero** [see *August 17, 2013 post*] or **The Wanderer** [see *October 15, 2013 post*]--a "spa day" (Oh, yes I did.). I am so "chicken whipped" that I actually drew that damn bird a warm bath, massaged her leg, wrapped her in a warm towel and held her on my lap for an hour (while we watched TV). After all of that, I hand fed her some crushed up corn chips with half a baby aspirin crushed in them. Oh yes...I did ALL of that. Here she is relaxing after her "treatment":



I have her isolated inside the coup for the next few days so she can rest that leg. Poor Princess Gimpy!

Bittersweet Day

January 2, 2014

It is a beautiful day out here at Ginger Goat Farm...a sunny day with white, puffy, cottonball clouds high in the sky and a gentle breeze. It's in the low 80's so, it has been a perfect day to "deep clean" the duck pen (as much as you can deep clean the duck pen) and to take care of some other odds and ends around the farm.

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Anyway, while I was out pulling some weeds in the garden I realized that Sheila, one year ago today, died. Sheila was our dog that moved with us out here. She was almost 15 years old and she only lived at Ginger Goat Farm for 7 weeks. I am still pretty emotional about it and that's all I want to write about her and what happened on this day last year.

We have Daisy and Duke and I love them (as they are both napping at my feet while I type), but they're not Sheila and I have to move on (as any dog lover knows and understands).

Baking...the new frontier

January 8, 2014

In our quest to becoming true homesteaders, I am cooking most of our meals (and more and more of our food is coming from our ever growing garden). I am also baking bread. I had NO idea how easy and how few ingredients are in bread: flour, yeast, salt, and water. That's it. Amazing. Here is my third loaf (I added some sesame seeds [YUM]):



I am still pretty nervous about the idea of me cooking/baking. I am using simple recipes with ingredients we have around here (eggs [lots of eggs], onions, tomatoes, avocados, etc. [and soon, potatoes, eggplant, peppers, garlic, bananas, etc.]). I just hope that my cooking skills improve because right now, they're pretty rudimentary. Billy keeps reminding me that soon, I have to come to terms that we will also be eating chickens, pigs, ducks, fish, and deer from around here. Right now, I am still buying our meat from the

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grocery (and when the time comes, I might become a vegetarian [again]). I just don't know right now...after rehabbing Princess Gimpy last week [see *January 2, 2014 post*], it very well could happen).

It is gratifying to have the ability to not only grow, but to prepare your food. I'll admit, I never really have been a "foodie." I mean, I like food and I LOVE to eat good food, but to me--the majority of the time--I ate to not be hungry anymore. Seriously, I ate to get it over with. Countless times I was so famished I ate tortilla chips right out of the bag (or cereal right out of the box) because I was too starving (or maybe too lazy?) to wait the 3 minutes it takes for the microwave to heat up a Lean Cuisine frozen meal. Yeah, that's right, I was/am THAT bad. If my choice was between flavor of the food or the effort it takes to prepare, I'd pick the latter. Sad, huh?

Oh well, back to the bread. I did A LOT of Googling on the Internet to find the easiest, cheapest, and fastest way to make bread...and I found it, [RIGHT HERE](#) (You're welcome). Check it out. No kneading. No nothing. Plus, the author wrote the directions in a very engaging and witty style (with pictures, too).

It's really good bread. We love it (next time I am going to try whole wheat flour with a little bit of rosemary).

Update on Princess Gimpy

January 13, 2014

UPDATE (from "Ginger Goat Spa, for hens" January 1, 2014 post):

Princess Gimpy is barely gimping. We can barely distinguish her from the rest of the girls. She's hopping on the roost bar every night and laying her eggs in the nest box (because, for the past 4 days, we have been getting 10 eggs).

It appears my "spa day" was effective (so, maybe I'm not THAT crazy).

Ginger Goat Farm Guidelines

January 23, 2014

Well, it's wintertime here at Ginger Goat Farm--which means (to us)--we have had 50 degree weather for THREE DAYS IN A ROW. I know, I know, most people think I am insane when I bitch and moan about 50 degree weather (especially when it has been in the single digits up North where I am from), but I have lived in Florida for 15 years (which I think makes me a native Floridian at this point) and my blood is thin.

Many times I ask myself how did I survive in Ohio in the winter? Ohio has some crazy weather going on.

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Now, don't get me wrong, I love Ohio. I love everything about it...in the SUMMER! Seriously, there were days that I woke up with the heat on, turned the A/C on at noon, the heat back on at 3, and then the A/C back on at 7 pm, anytime of the year. Ohio is a place where you can get away with wearing a turtleneck under a sweatshirt (typically an OSU Buckeyes one), short shorts, and Uggs boots because the weather changes that much and that quickly. I have taken a 3 hour road trip in Ohio and fluctuated fiddling back and forth with the heat and the A/C, pending on what direction the sun was coming in the car; didn't matter if it was summer or winter.



Anyway, we have had a few days of *relatively* cooler weather (and I should enjoy it because come August, I will be really be missing these temperatures) and I have done a bit of reflecting on crafting some guidelines for Ginger Goat Farm. You know, something for when the "cityfolk" come on out and visit. Some of these guidelines include:

1. **Wear closed-toe shoes.** (It's a farm. We have animals. They poop. Also, it's Florida. We have bugs. Big ones that bite hard.)
2. **If you wear your shoes in any of the animal pens, don't wear them in my house.** (I think that one is pretty self-explanatory.)
3. **If you eat meat, you eat animals.** (Don't look at us like we are cruel people because, eventually, these animals will be slaughtered [humanely]. Where do you think that Big Mac came from? Or chicken wings? At least our animals live a full life that is free of stress and enjoy being outside in the sun.)
4. **Don't lecture me about being organic.** (I do the best I can to do anything and everything to use natural and pesticide-free products, but if I have a fire ant hill encroaching on "my" (or my animals') space, I will do *whatever* it takes to eliminate those little SOBs.)
5. **Yes, our water tastes a little "funny."** (Our water comes from a well on our property. It has not been treated with the chemicals you are probably used to tasting.)
6. **Only #1, #2, and toilet paper gets flushed down the toilet.** (We are on our own septic. Not to be too graphic, but other things (i.e. feminine hygienic products) are a big no no as, eventually, all of it will need to be pumped out [ewwwwww].)

I'm still working on some more, but I think it's a fairly good start.

Just another rainy day

January 30, 2014

The winter weather has been a little crazy around here lately--hot and sunny one day, cold and drizzly the next. It seems like there is no rhyme or reason to it; I just have to roll with it day by day. The recent wacky changes in the weather sure affect my life a lot more now than when I lived in the city (or 'burbs). Before, a

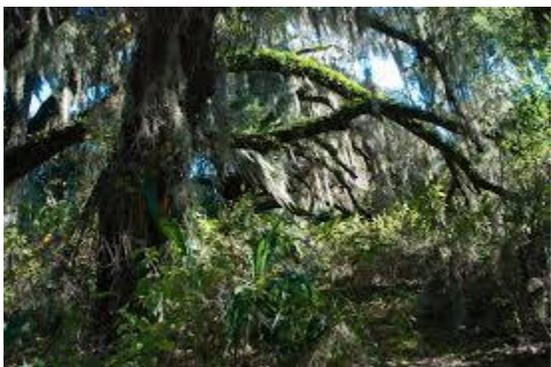
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cooler, rainy day would just piss me off because the traffic to and from work (or the store or wherever I was going) was a lot slower (and the the drivers were a lot dumber). Icky weather was more of an inconvenience rather than a potential game changer on my plans for the day.

Take today for example--the forecast for today was *supposed* to be sunny, dry, and in the low 70s--a perfect day to weed the yard, fertilize the trees, and work in the garden. When I woke up this morning, it was raining (I am pretty sure it rained all night) and it hasn't stopped all morning, all afternoon--and the way it is looking now--it will be raining into the evening. I am not complaining--we need the rain--it's just I won't be doing what I had planned today (and probably not for a few days, it's pretty mushy out there).



I am learning that homesteading (or farming or country-life or whatever you want to call it) requires persistence, patience, and flexibility--like most things in life. It's natural. And, if you really think about it, city-life is a bit unnatural with its bright lights all night and food available at all times (that is shipped in, many times, from the other side of the world, typically eaten while sitting on a couch in front of a TV [and/or a computer]). City-life affords you the ability to not really have to worry about flexibility and persistence (to a certain extent); however, I will

say your patience is tried a lot more than country-life.

It seems to me when I lived in the city-life "mode," I really wasn't living my life in the "present." I was talking or texting people anytime, anywhere, for any reason--while driving, eating, talking--whenever, wherever. Maybe it was just more of a mindset. I don't think it's natural to be so connected to everything and everyone all of the time. I know, some people will, and do, disagree with me--and that's okay. I am not saying I'm right and you're wrong, but there is some "naturalness" and peacefulness to not be concerned with what everyone else is doing (or thinking) and them not knowing what I am doing every second of the day. Because, let's be honest, the day-to-day tasks of homesteading is NOT glamorous or all that exciting. But, really, when you think about it, is anyone's life really all that glamorous and exciting (however, it probably is a bit more sanitary than mine [cleaning up after animals and digging in the dirt all day])?

There is something oddly beautiful about working really hard, getting really dirty and just living--just being--in that moment. And, at the end of the day of hard work, to just look up into the sky and admire the sunset or the cloud formations or even the stars.

In theory, it seems like it would be so easy to do just that...but it is something I am struggling to learn to do. Even now, a year later, I am still unlearning the "noise" from city-life (and the "noise" from inside my head)

What in the world is GG?

February 19, 2014

A few days ago, Billy was trolling around on [Craigslist](#) (if you havnn't trolled on [Craigslist](#), give it a try...you can find anything and everything on [Craigslist](#)) and found this:



"What exactly is that thing?" you are probably wondering right now...

1. Is it a golf cart?
2. A four-wheeler?
3. An ATV?
4. ...and you are also probably thinking, "Is that thing painted camo?"

Well, to answer these (and probably many other) questions...

1. Yes,
2. Yes,
3. Sorta yes, and
4. Yes.

It is a golf cart with huge ATV tires that we can go 4-wheeling with on the state lands behind us. We can also tool around in it to move and carry "stuff" around the homestead. And to make it even more complete (and totally redneck-y) it is painted--all over--including the tire wells, in camo. Yes, that's right, camouflage--with little G's stamped ALL over it (we can only assume that the G's are for the Georgia

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Bulldogs [or is it dawgs?]); however, we choose to have the G's stand for **Ginger Goat**. That is our story and we are sticking to it.

So, GG (that's what we call him. The tractor--Big Blue--is BB [see *November 29, 2012 post* or go to the Photos Section]) is totally decked out with:

- CB Radio (because who needs a cellphone when you have a CB, right? [*breaker, breaker, good buddy*])
- CD player (can you tell this is an older model of a golf cart/ATV/4-wheeler?)
- interior lights
- headlights
- FOUR cup holders (for your current and future drinks)
- a water tight battery system (yeah, that's right, we can plug this puppy in every night; it needs NO gas.)
- top speed of 30 MPH (for an hour and a half...we tested it)
- and a latchable windshield (for those chilly [50 degrees] February Florida evenings)

Yeah, it's fun...and totally utilitarian :).

Baby ducks.....Maybe???

March 6, 2014 at 2:20 PM

It's been a bit busy around Ginger Goat Farm for the past few weeks...with the addition of the Goat Cart (or GG; see *February 19th post*) we have had the opportunity to do some exploring that we really never had the opportunity to do before. We have discovered that the State land behind us is absolutely breathtaking. We have a whole new perspective--seeing it from a vehicle rather than slogging along in rubber boots and being pelted in the face by tree branches. All and all, GG has been a great purchase, for fun as well as for utility (taking the garbage cans [a quarter of a mile] to the road for pickup, getting mail, picking up yard debris, running over fire ant hills [hee hee]).

In other news, we might--MIGHT--be hatching baby ducklings sometime in the near future (well, WE won't, Fran might [see *Sept. 24th post*]). Supposedly, Pekin ducks are not very broody (i.e. don't sit and incubate their eggs), but Fran has been sitting on her clutch, off and on every morning, for the past couple of months:

At one point a couple of weeks ago, she had 18 eggs in her nest, but after about 3 days, she had given up. However,



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about a week ago, she started back up again. We had read that the first few clutches might not work for a young female duck. So, we have been keeping an eye her nest and whenever she pushes any eggs out, we get rid of them (right now, she has about 7-9 eggs in there).

Frik doesn't make it all that easy for her to stay put, either. Every morning when we let them out, she remains on her nest and Frik waddles out as fast as he can. Frik is almost taunting her--sort of like back when we were kids. It's almost like he is shouting, "*Na na na. I'm going to play outside and you have to stay inside. Na na na.*" Then, to make it even worse, after about an hour outside, he gets even worse, he starts splashing around in the pond and runs back and forth in front of the duck pen. I swear, I almost hear him yelling, "*Wahooo. Wheeeeeeee.....*". He can be quite a stinker.

Also, because he doesn't have Fran around most of the morning (for their dirty dancing on the pond, wink, wink), he starts harassing the Chicken Posse (if you remember from an earlier post, the hens put the ducks in the "friend zone" a long time ago). Typically, the hens just squat and take his harassment, but this last time when we let the girls free-range around the yard, they fought back. Hard. Seriously, it was like watching a bunch of little old ladies swatting their handbags at some little punk at the mall. It was great. I am totally Team Chicken Posse when there is a throwdown among the chickens and the duck(s), even though Frik is outnumbered 10:1. I'd take a picture, but I am too busy laughing.

Frik is still a sweetheart, but he is like a walking hormone around the hens. Typical boy....

Puppy-Duck Throwdown

March 18, 2014

Here's a quick preview of what we do to entertain ourselves around here:

[PUPPY DUCK THROWDOWN](#)

(This was filmed about a week and a half ago....Fran is no longer hanging around the pond...she's dutifully sitting on her clutch for the past eight days!!!! Keep your fingers and toes crossed she can make it for the long haul.)

Daisy is the one "herding" the ducks...Duke--as usual--would rather sit back and watch.

One week down, three to go (hopefully)

March 19, 2014

One week ago--today--Fran started sitting, consistently, on her clutch (*see last post*). So, if she can hang in there for 3 more weeks (it takes 28 days for duck eggs to hatch), we will have a flock (or a brace, badelynge, or a bunch) of ducklings. It is SO exciting, but I have to share with you that Fran looks pretty worse for wear right now. She looks exhausted--and hot. We don't bother her too much, but when we do go back there and check on her, we can't help but feel for her.

Let me tell you, from what I've seen, being a female Pekin duck doesn't look like it's all that fun...from their [mating patterns](#) (looks kind of rape-y to me...and Frik is a pretty gentle dude) to the [bald spot on her head](#) and those big eggs she lays everyday...hell just might be coming back to this earth as a female Pekin duck. For reals.

So, we'll keep you posted on Fran's progress!



Also, I harvested my first "advanced" crop, cauliflower. Check it out:

Pretty, huh? I am pretty excited (the chickens absolutely loved the leaves). I've done pretty well with my tomatoes and lettuce; however, not so good with my potatoes, peppers, and onions. I am still waiting on my eggplant and brussel sprouts. In the next few weeks, I am looking to start growing my "tropical" fruits and vegetables (bananas, papaya, guava, etc.). Still have no idea what I am doing in the gardening department, but I am hoping as time goes on, more will live than I kill.

Baby ducks.....Nope

March 31, 2014

Sad news to report from Ginger Goat Farm....Fran abandoned her clutch after nearly 3 weeks in. Even odder, NONE of the eggs were fertilized????

Stay tuned...

Destroying things

April 12, 2014

A change of events has been going on around the farm....Frik has been/is being a real SOB to Fran (I discussed it a bit in the *March 19, 2014 post*), but he is getting worse! Check out Fran's neck:

Awful, isn't? Her neck is raw and looks incredibly painful. Poor Fran (I am a huge Fran fan now).

I haven't reported on Daisy and Duke for awhile. They're fine. Actually, they're more than fine. The two of them strut around Ginger Goat Farm like they run/own the place (all 60+ pounds of Duke and 50+ pounds of Daisy). It's quite cute. The unfortunate thing about the Dynamic Duo is they LOVE LOVE LOVE to put anything/everything in their mouths and drag it anywhere and anywhere. We find tree branches under the couch, rocks in the pool, and chewed palms leaves still hanging off the tree. If they can wrap their mouths around it, it will be chewed, moved, and left.



However, I can't complain too much, they haven't done much of the "classic" puppy chewing behavior such as chewing up a favorite, most expensive pair of shoes (or even worse, just chewing up ONE shoe) or gnawing on the side of a chair leg or chomping through an entire couch (but I do have to admit, my throw pillows on the couch bit the dust months ago). But I'll tell you, those [Indestructibles](#) dog toys are total BS. Check out what the Dynamic Duo do to "Indestructibles" in 30 minutes:



That ball under Daisy's (on the right) foot was orange (it's now clear)...the cover is behind and under her back paws. And the ball Duke (on the left) is playing with, half is by his back leg and we have no idea where the other half went (maybe he ate it). THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN 30 MINUTES AFTER THEY GOT THEIR TOYS. THIRTY MINUTES!!!

Indestructible???

Yeah, whatever.

Introducing the Sweet 16

April 20, 2014

We have just added a few new residents to Ginger Goat Farm. Introducing the "Sweet 16":

Sixteen [Buff Orpingtons](#) (rather than the 10 Rhode Island Red [RIR] girls we currently have).

There is absolutely nothing wrong with my RIR girls, but it is time for some new little babies around here and the feed store only had Buff Orpingtons (and after some quick research on *Wikipedia* and *My Pet Chicken*, the Buffs seem fine to me; in fact, they'll probably look exactly like my other girls when they grow up). This go around, we are going with a "straight run" (i.e. "unsexed...might have half boys/girls, all boys, all girls, who knows?). I am not a big rooster fan, but...supposedly...Buff roosters are pretty mellow (We will see....).



Stay tuned...we will be getting 6 baby ducks this Wednesday!!!!!!!

You lookin' at me?

April 21, 2014



Yeah....I'm looking at you!

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What are you going to do about it? Me and my homeys will KILL you with our cuteness.

Frik attacked

May 5, 2014 PM

Things have been going pretty well around here at the farm. We've been extremely busy with the Lucky 7 (our 7 new ducklings) and the Sweet 16 (our 16 new chickies) and our new gardens (and fighting the bugs and weeds). Check out "Happy Hour":



It's just been "business as usual" --until this morning. Either Daisy or Duke (most probably Daisy) attacked Frik. It might quite possibly be a life or death situation. I will not post a picture of Frik because it is quite disturbing.

I hate to admit this, but I am crying as I am writing. I love that damn duck. A lot more than I ever thought.

If you can remember awhile back, we originally started with Frik and Frak (see *March 27, 2013 post*). Frak met his untimely death by unsuccessfully "fronting" a bobcat and losing his head--literally (see *September 24, 2013 post*). I'll be the first to admit that I was a little bit upset over losing Frak (not really). However, when we replaced him with Fran, life around Ginger Goat Farm was quite a bit more peaceful (and Frik was MUCH happier).

I am not quite sure exactly what all happened this morning; all I know is that Daisy chased Frik over to me while I was still cleaning and feeding the new babies (chickies and duckies). Honestly, I wasn't prepared to take proper care of him when he lept into my arms. His neck was completely raw and I noticed a few puncture marks in his neck. I was in complete shock, so, I screamed at the dogs to go back in the house and I put Frik back down by the pond. I feel responsible for most (or all) of it because Billy and I used to entertain ourselves by watching Duke and Daisy chase Frik and Fran in the pond--except we didn't want them to hurt them!!!!

Now, several hours later, I still don't know what to do. I called several vets (oh, yes I did) and they would be happy for me to bring him in for a battery of tests, antibiotics, etc., etc., but my head keeps reminding my heart that FRIK IS A DUCK. I do not want to become that crazy duck lady that spends hundreds of dollars (plus I can't even catch him now to put him in my car) ON A DUCK! And, I have 7 little baby duckies that will be full grown in 6 weeks (Pekin ducks are full grown in 7 weeks. It's crazy how fast they grow). Regardless, I still love Frik (Billy is so mad at me for naming all of these animals).

So, I have been digging around the Internet trying to find out what I should do. Let me tell you, there are some crazy duck ladies (and gentlemen) out there. Some sites recommend leaving injured ducks alone and

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some are just completely over the top (just Google "duck attacked" or "duck injury" but be forewarned, some of the posted pictures are pretty graphic).

Twice today, I have gone over to Frik to try to get a closer look and to, hopefully, give him some basic first aid, but he is still pretty shell-shocked (understandably). So, please keep Frik in your thoughts for a speedy, full recovery. I will keep you posted on what happens to him.

Oh, BTW, I am not mad at the dogs. I understand that dogs will be dogs, but they will not be going outside unsupervised anymore until we can figure out how the dogs and ducks can live in harmony.

Afternoon Delight

May 6, 2014

Well, it's late afternoon and Frik is still a trooper. He made it through last night and he's still fighting the good fight today. He's slowly moving around and I am doing my best to leave him alone (but it's really hard, I just want to pick him up and protect him). I spent ALL last night trolling on the Internet looking for anything and everything about ducks. I also learned something else--after awhile--anything you are looking for on the Internet will eventually lead to porn. How trying to research duck neck injury treatment can lead to porn, I have no idea, other than there are some really sick bastards out there.



So, all day today I have been doing hourly checks on Frik (Fran hasn't left his side) and liberally spraying [Vetericyn](#) on his wound(s). Every once in awhile while I am with him, he nibbles some cracked corn from my hand. I am keeping the 2 of them in their cage (and the dogs in the house) for an undetermined amount of time. He has pretty much remained in Fran's nesting box the whole time (and she laid an egg today). He came out a little bit earlier today:

I wasn't going to take a picture of him while he was down and out, but I changed my mind (plus, he looks a whole lot better today). See how Fran is standing (err, sitting) by her man. She won't leave his side.

Also, I have to share something I did earlier today. I ran out of Vetericyn (it's expensive) so I drove over to our favorite local feed store to buy some more. Wouldn't you know they had some ADORABLE baby chickies (I heard them before I saw them). They were SO cute...little baby Barred Rocks and Black Sex-link girls. So, I bought 2 of each. We now have 20 baby chickies:



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They are almost exactly the same age as our *Sweet 16* so it wasn't a problem at all to group them all together (no fighting!!!!). Now, we have the *Triumphant 20*.

Billy was teasing me that I am becoming an animal hoarder (oh no!!!!!!).

Somewhere between a fart and a cough

May 28, 2014

Again, where does the time go? I can't believe I haven't posted for nearly 3 weeks and so much is happening (well, maybe not a lot, but we've been really busy). Frik is nearly recovered. I mean, he is still pretty haggard looking, but his neck and chest feathers are nearly grown in and his feistiness has almost returned. Now don't get me wrong, his feisty is tempered with a healthy caution--especially towards the dogs. Frik isn't really swimming on the pond yet, but he waddles in waist deep and enjoys himself now that we are in our full-blown sweltering Florida summer season.

This summer heat sure came on fast this year. I think I might have a bit more luck this year with my gardening than I did last year (*see April 10, 2013 post*). Currently, I have successfully harvested tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, and peppers and it looks like my Brussel sprouts, okra, peanuts (yep, peanuts), and squash are going to make it, too. Very exciting (considering all the bugs we have down here).

The baby chickies and baby duckies have entered their awkward "teenage" phase and are they crazy looking...particularly the chickens:



This year (we think) we have 8 roosters (all Buff Orpingtons, aka blonde) and 12 hens (2 Black Sex-link, 2 Barred Rock, and 8 Buff Orpingtons). All are fine, but the roosters are just starting to get a little spunky with one another (swell up and get in each others' faces....like typical teenaged boys). We also think we have 3 female duckies and 4 drakes (males). Pretty much the only way you can distinguish between duck sexes at this age is by their quack. Drakes have sweet quiet little quacks and females are loud...sort of

like a cross between a cough and a fart (I'm not kidding). They look EXACTLY alike until the drakes grow their "[drake feather](#)."

Frik is back on the pond!!!!

June 6, 2014

..and other than a bit of [Blue-Kote](#) (which is really purple) still stained on his neck, you really cannot even tell that Frik was at Death's door a few weeks ago:

I know that Fran is especially happy that Frik is back in action.

However, she isn't going to be so thrilled when the other female ducks are in the picture (of the 7 babies, we are pretty sure that we have FIVE female ducks and only TWO drakes...every day our duckies get bigger and bigger and louder and louder [see [May 28, 2014 post](#)]).

Damn it's hot

July 22, 2014

Holy peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, it is friggin' hot outside.

Today. Yesterday. Last week. And, most probably tomorrow.

And, I don't see any relief until, like, the middle of September....MAY-be.

I woke up at 5.30 this morning to let out the various critters we have around here and, I kid you not, after only about 30 seconds outside, I was sweating like a drunk at an early Sunday morning church service. But, to tell you the truth, I can deal with the heat (kind of), however, the bugs...OH MY GOD...they are relentless. In fact, as I sit here and type away, I can name 5 different kinds of bug bites that currently are on my body. For reals. As of now, I have:

1. A wasp bite on my right shoulder blade from weeding (and mulching chicken poop) around some banana plants (yeah, that really hurt).
2. About 5 fire ant bites on my left foot from walking from the porch to the garden shed (stupid me wore flip flops...idiot. Even though the shed is only, like 30 feet from the porch, those sonsabeetches mauled my foot like there was no tomorrow).
3. A spider bite on my left wrist from riding around GG (see [February 19, 2014 post](#)) at dusk (I was just riding around, out back, with Billy and just happened to glance down and saw this little light brown spider having Happy Hour on my hand.)
4. Numerous mosquito bites all over my body, primarily those little nooks and crannies that I missed when I sprayed myself with *Off!* (you know, those place you miss...like under your arms, the back of your ears, between your toes? These mosquitoes swarm like relatives at a rich person's funeral).

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5. And the funnest bite of all...a deer (or horse) fly bite on the bottom of my right foot! Yes, on the bottom of my foot. You ask, "How, pray tell, did you get that bite, Sherlock?" No, I didn't step on a deer (or horse) fly. I was in our (screened in) back porch and one of those winged devils bit me on the bottom of my foot while I was sitting, cross-legged, enjoying a well-deserved adult beverage. Can you believe it?

Again, I don't mean to sound whiny or anything...I love living here...but I'll tell you, living in Florida in the dead of summer is not for sissies (just like living up North in the dead of winter).

Adventures in gardening....a partial success!!!!

June 25, 2014

Well, here we are entering our second full blown, sweltering South Central Florida summer. I can't even begin to describe how hot it is...you really have to experience it yourself.

...and usually all of those seasons are all wrapped up into one season--June through September.

Anyway, regardless of the excruciatingly excessive sweating all of us endure down here this time of the year, all is going pretty well. I am sorta/kinda learning what I can and cannot grow down here in my garden in the heat of the summer. Cucumbers are growing like crazy (with LOTS and LOTS of water and animal poo) and the tomatoes are a hit or miss. It's not so much the heat that is killing my tomatoes, but the bugs--big crazy orange and black bugs that devour only half of the tomato and leave it still on the vine.

It's so frustrating, those little buggers so piss me off. However, the chickens aren't complaining (I give the half eaten tomatoes to them to finish off).

I am also doing pretty well with my peppers, eggplants, and onions. Oh, and the lettuce is doing OKAY in the shade. Ahhhhh shade.....something we so covet down here this time of the year. Shade and a breeze....sigh.....but you know what? I will take this unreasonably stupid heat and humidity rather than a Midwestern winter. I really would.



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Floating duck house

July 28, 2014

You're probably reading that title and thinking, "What in the Sam Hill is a floating duck house?"

Well, I will educate you on what a floating duck house is--it is a house, for ducks, that floats. No really, I don't mean to sound like an asshole, but that's what it really is. To tell you the truth, I had never heard of one, either. It is all on Billy (and his hours and hours of self-educating himself on YouTube...[have you ever done any researching/trolling on YouTube? There is some crazy stuff, and people, on there]).

After months and months of the daily hosing out of our duck pen (a repurposed dog pen...remember, this place used to be a puppy mill) and dealing with the poo (the smell), the bugs (oh the agonizing and irritating bites), and the little ducky dance we had to do every night with Frik and Fran to get them back in the pen...Billy designed and built a floating duck house:



It's the blue thing on the left. It's pretty sexy, huh? Billy spent a lot of time on it and it is AWESOME. They can go up and down the ramp and the food is inside. No more dealing with all of the grossness that comes with ducks (and the fish absolutely love love love all of the duck poo...almost as much as Daisy and Duke...ewwww, icky).

And in the picture, the ducks are (obviously) on the right. Pimp Daddy Frik is in front. He struts around that pond like he is Mackin' the Knife. We are seriously thinking of hooking him up with a bright fuchsia fedora, a walking stick, and a pimp cup. He has (finally) put his libido a little bit in check (just a little) and now they can all be around each other (most of the time).

We don't have any signs hanging on the duck house (and we will soon). We haven't named it yet, either (remember, I love naming all of the animals and the houses they live in [see *August 17, 2013 post*]...I'm weird). I like *Frik's Moonlite DuckyRanch* (if you watch HBO, you'll totally get it), but Billy isn't quite sold on it. So, stay tuned and I'll let you know what we finally come up with for a name.

Oh well, I will type more later; it is doggie dinner time. I kid you not, these damn dogs can tell time, almost to the minute.

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